BING

September

1988

Edited by REG BRISTO

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

NO 89

"Scheduled in the normal way for mid-September posting, it is now anybody's guess when you will be reading this issue ! The strike has been 'settled' for some days as we write, but here in South Wales the postal staff show no inclination to return to work. Page 5 will certainly be a casualty, and of only historical interest no doubt Posting boxes remain sealed and mail for franking will not be accepted 'over the counter' so nothing can be done - except to get BING into the post just as soon as possible. A week ago it was said it would take two weeks to clear the pile-up so we must assume that every day that passes that time will increase.

And with execrable timing, the post-office, which regularly announces astronomical profits, announces bang in the middle of the stoppage, higher mail charges ! Mail, of course, is a very important part of our budgeting. Mindful of so many Senior Citizens and redundant members we work on a shoe-string as regards annual subscription but we must study well what these new charges will mean to the exchequer. Not only the posting of BING is involved, of course, but all the supporting and subsidiary mail we necessarily get involved in. So, an increase in subs may be necessary.

Unusually for us these days, we went out for a celebratory dinner - someone's special birthday. We were amused, on studying the menu, to see a sweet named MISSISSIPPI MUD! Turning the menu-card over we discovered the proprietor's name was - P. WHITMAN! (Turned out to be Phillip, not Paul). We were beginning to wonder if we'd got caught up in some time-machine but no, it was THE GATE RESTAURANT, and not the Cocoanut Grove. When the sweet-trolley was paraded, the Crosby-sweet lived up to its name. There was a thick, wafer-biscuit base, holding a thick layer of chocolate fudge material - for all the world like mud, Mississippi or any other. This rather dull-looking concoction was considerably enlivened by another layer of bright, golden cream. Had to have it - tasted fine, too.

The waiter, a nice young fella, wouldn't have appreciated the joke so I didn't ask if The Rhythm Boys were providing the cabaret.....

1903 1977

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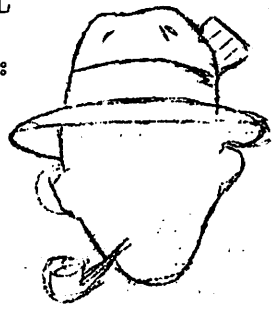

BING

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A "X" in the box opposite indicates your subscription is due with this issue or shortly afterwards and BEFORE the next:

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Firstly, thanks to all who have contributed to this issue whether named or not.

As we tie up this issue a nationwide postal strike is raging with no sign of a settlement in view. This is a serious matter in scores of very important ways; but our concern is that the Leeds dinner may be in some jeopardy, perhaps leading to a postponement. You cannot, of course, be reading this unless that strike is settled and a thing of the past. Any dramatic amendment to the Leeds notice will be included possibly by a separate slip in this issue.

Whatever the mysterious marketing machinations were in connection with the Tenth Anniversary Set which led to it being offered for sale at half-price we don't really know. But they haven't prevented really momentous issues, some already in existence in America, others scheduled. Our editorial and the further news inside will illuminate!

EDITORIAL

"BING CROSBY records are dated..." "Record companies are not charitable institutions but commercial concerns..." "You can't expect record companies to issue Crosby records just for the benefit of fan clubs..." "Crosby records stay on the shelves..."

These, and many similar, are comments and opinions we've heard expressed very frequently for many years now. The strange thing is that Crosby records ARE, and HAVE BEEN, issued during those years. All the way through.

Now comes the great rebuttal of all for those views! This issue contains what we call the staggering news that CBS are issuing, RE-issuing, their BING CROSBY COLLECTION - IN VASTLY ENLARGED FORM. And these will include unadulterated tracks from 1928 RECORDS MADE PRECISELY 60 YEARS AGO !

Now CBS assuredly is not a charitable organisation; lower management there may have heard of our Circle on account of members' letters but the authoritative board is most unlikely to know of our existence so they haven't set out to "please fan clubs". Yet, they are issuing these historic tracks in the latest reproducing form - Compact Discs!

Take into account, also, that those who actually remember the issue of these tracks (some of them at least) 60 years ago are, alas, but in the natural order of things, getting fewer and fewer as the years roll by.

So surely we can all take heart, tremendous heart, from this great development. CBS are certainly putting Mr. Crosby in his rightful historical place. And it is of supreme importance that the voice of Bing Crosby is now enshrined on Compact Disc. More than that, tracks from the earliest days of his monumental career.

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IT'S LEEDS TIME AGAIN!

FOR the twenty-third successive year we are pleased to announce that the annual dinner/meeting/get-together (call it what you like!) will be held on:

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2ND AT

the now customary venue of THE MANSION HOTEL, ROUNDHAY PARK, LEEDS

From 3pm until 10pm:- The cost, inclusive of the dinner, is £9.50p.

Tickets are available only from the host/organiser,

MICHAEL CRAMPTON,
19 Carrholm Crescent,
Chapel Allerton,
LEEDS,
West Yorkshire,
LS7 2NL (Tel: 0532-689556)

Overnight accommodation may be had at reasonable rates at the ASH MOUNT HOTEL, (Tel: 0532-654263)

The proceedings will follow the format of previous years. Unpretentious, not over-ambitious - just highoy convenial and a splendid place to meet kindred spirits in Crosbyana. Nevertheless, there will be a new video presentation by JIM REILLY, whose expertise in these programmes has many times adorned the Leeds event. There will be the usual quizzes, good for interest - and fun.

The Menu for the dinner, timed for 5.15pm is:

Cream of mushroom soup
Stuffed loin of pork with apple and cider sauce.
Roast potatoes.-

Apricot Bombette

Coffee with dairy cream and wafer mints.

Bar exclusive to the party will, of course, be available.

Nearing a quarter of a century of enthusiasm, effort, and dedication, in the cause of Bing by Michael Crampton, whose interest in the great man dates from when he was 14. An annual exercise in organisation in which Michael has demonstrated his enduring admiration; no once-and for - all effort. Staying power is the term and we congratulate Michael once again on his great efforts in Crosbyana.

All are welcome..... most regrettably, the state of your Editor's health does not permit of undertaking the lengthy cross-country journey from South Wales to Leeds.....but assuredly he will be there in spirit.....

LESLIE GAYLOR

OF COURSE ! **********

Some readers may, like your Editor, get the uncomfortable feeling that possibly another outfit is after poaching our doughty Bing-man! We jest, of course, for there is no doubting where Leslie's interests lie..... but you will see what we mean as you proceed!

Editor.

THE morning of June 5th last found me rising early in order to make a trip to London; the venue I was heading for was Baden Powell House in South Kensington where the Sinatra Music Society were holding one of their meetings. I had been tipped off that the well-loved and famous British singer, ANNE SHELTON, was to be present as a "guest presenter". In addition, I had received a letter from the secretary of the London branch of the Sinatra society, Marjorie Nunn confirming that Anne would be present on that date and inviting me to attend also, and should I intend to do so a seat would be reserved for me.

> Anne's association with Bing is well-known and I felt it would be an excellent opportunity to learn from the good lady more of her contacts with Mr. C. and her feelings in general about him.

I was warmly greeted on my arrival and shown to my reserved seat - and a few moments later everyone was delighted when Alan Dell, the famed record presenter of the BBC and as all members know an especially good friend to us in the matter of broadcasting Crosby items, arrived. His allegiance to Bing and his memory over the past few years in his SOUNDS EASY programme has won Alan many accolades from all over Britain, including Ireland, as I have personally discovered.

Alan and I soon joined forces and I found it extremely pleasant to sit with him and I was particularly pleased when our picture was taken. A nice souvenir. Then Anne arrived with her sister and though she was given a tremendous welcome and completely surrounded, I managed to speak to her several times. I told her I felt certain she would have something to say about Bing and that was, in fact, the main reason why I had travelled up from the Isle of Wight !

> "Sure I have - you'll like my stories and memories of Bing - and Fred Astaire," said Anne warmly.

When eventually Anne was introduced to the gathering from the platform things got hilarious and we found that there was much more to Anne Shelton than her singing- splendid as that always is. Recalling incidents in her long career and the famous artists she had met and worked with she quite cleverly assumed their voice and style, impersonated them in fact, to great and authentic effect. This was a side of Anne Shelton that neither Alan Dell or I - or come to that, any of the audience - had hitherto suspected. A most talented side, too.

THAT PRECIOUS "TWO-BOB"

NOT unnaturally, Anne began her comments on Bing by recalling that remarkable day in August, 1944 when Bing had just arrived here on his first-ever visit to Britain and Europe generally. How Anne received a phone call telling her that she was wanted by Bing to sing with him on the BBCs VARIETY BAND-BOX radio programme is a story well-known to our members but always worth hearing. Anne has related how she was convinced someone was pulling her leg for, with most other people, Bing was easily her most favourite singer and singing with him was something she had never aspired to.

Although barely sixteen at that time, Anne already had a considerable reputation for she had been singing with several big bands of the period, notably that of the famous Ambrose Orchestra. Indeed, many people were of the opinion that her singing style, though of course totally feminine, was modelled on the phrasing and style of Bing.

Anne also told again the story of the "two-bob" piece - 10p as it is today - and considerably devalued!

Before the final Palladium concert Anne received a letter from Bing asking her to attend one of the shows; she replied, however, that that seemed impossible as all the seats were booked. In reply Bing said he had arranged for a few of the seats to be reserved and that one was certainly at Anne's disposal.

During the interval she went backstage and met Bing in his dressing-room where she was, of course, also introduced to Kathryn. Talking over old times the VARIETY BAND-BOX incident came up and Anne produced the actual "two-bob" that Bing had given her in August 1944 and which she had kept and treasured to this day.

ON HEARING THAT ANNE HAD LOVINGLY RETAINED THE COIN ALL THROUGH THE YEARS BING SEEMED MOMENTARILY AFFECTED AND THERE WAS A TEAR OR TWO IN HIS EYES.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

"I'M coming back here in November to appear in the Royal Variety Command Performance," Bing told Anne, and he went on to suggest that they tape some tracks together for a potential album. To this Anne delightedly agreed. Alas, we know what happened.

It emerged that just prior to the last Palladium concerts Bing had verbally agreed to make six albums. Polydor wanted an exclusive contract with Bing but he felt he couldn't agree to this as he thought he owed some allegiance to Decca Records in London and Geoff Milne, not only for his marathon long-term contact with that company but also because thro' Geoff Milne Decca had released the records here of the two produced by Bing's own organisation - namely, of course, A SOUTHERN MEMOIR and BINGO VIEJO.

"I would like to do one albym a year for the Decca people," Bing apparently said; and the first was to be a cbllection of Noel Coward songs. It will be recalled that Bing, perhaps in deference to Princess Margaret, had indeed sung a Coward selection in his final Palladium performances.

Earlier this year, I was reminded, Geoff Milne had very kindly telephoned me and in the course of our chat told me some interesting background information. All the musicians had been engaged, Geoff said, and once this had been done they have to be paid whether or not their services are required.

BUT SO SHOCKED AND SADDENED WERE THE MUSICIANS AT BING'S SUDDEN PASSING THAT THEY ALL WAIVED THEIR FEES.

MORE PHONE CALLS !

ON 13th June last the phone rang and a lady from Granada TV said THE STAGE newspaper (the show business publication) had suggested she contact me with a query. This was to the effect when was Bing Crosby's recording of GALWAY BAY made - and was it his 16th gold disc ?

The date of recording was easy enough of course, but for the life of me I couldn't tell the lady just where in Bing's 'golden' list GALWAY BAY came! Not straight off, that is. I told her I would check and let her know. My checking revealed that GALWAY BAY was, in fact, Bing's 19th gold disc. I got this from THE DAILY MAIL BOOK OF GOLDEN RECORDS by Joseph Murrells - a book it so happens that I participated in compiling many, many years ago.

It may be assumed that Granada TV are preparing a programme on Bing. Pity I didn't ask !

RAPTUROUS LOVE !

And at 10.40pm that very same day the phone rang again - to reveal this time that the caller was the celebrated British musical director, GEOFF LOVE. He was in raptures about the dozen or so Longine's Crosby tracks that I had run off for Marjorie Nunn of the Sinatra Music Society and which she had handed over to Geoff when he called at her house for the very purpose of picking them up. He told me he would be up early the next morning to go to Spain on holiday and that he would be playing the recordings in his car on his way to Heathrow!

> "TO THINK," said Geoff Love, "THAT I CONDUCTED THE ORCHESTRA FOR THE BING RECORDINGS IN THE 1960s - and HAVE NEVER HEARD THEM!"

It seems the musical scores were sent over from America, and Geoff Love told me he made literally dozens of orchestral tracks for the Longines Symphonette Society. In fact, it wasn't unusual for him to spend a whole week at a time making such recordings which subsequently appeared on a variety of releases by that society. This news of the background to the Longines set has come as a big surprise to many of our members, including yours truly !

BING AND RADIO MATERIAL

Lionel Pairpoint mentioned in the June issue of BING the Fioretti LP he had picked up called ALL AMERICAN STARS which featured three poor quality sound Bing radio items. This gives me the opportunity to reveal Bing's own point of view regarding poor quality of some radio material as he related it to me and Ken Barnes.

> "They are taking just about anything off radio and releasing it," Bing said, "often without a final okay from anyone."

This in itself didn't seem to bother him but he was clearly concerned about some of the poor engineering and in many cases wrong speed of some items. His concern was that such indiscriminate treatment of radio material would undoubtedly "let him down." Being very human and an artist of the utmost integrity Bing wsnted only the best of his efforts issued to the public.

So, in an officially agreed and settled manner, Bing was all for his radio material being issued on some albums; and he also approved the best of the CBS Buddy Cole recordings being issued - tho' only the best of them.

In fact, some memorable words of Bing's remain with me particularly; they were to the effect that I might, in the future, and from time to time, bring up his radio material with the wish that someone of repute may be interested in issuing it. Listening to some of the stuff that has been put out conveys to me very simply why Bing was not in a happy frame of mind with the "cowboy" types who lacked engineering skills necessary and made "lesser quality" sounds worse than they were when originally made.

LOST OPPORTUNITIES...

When I think back on matters I've learned about regarding Bing's recording career from the mid-50s onwards, and his own personal comments to me as to why he cut back on making records because he didn't want to waste other people's money, I really do feel a little sad about it all.

The 1950s and 1960s in my opinion was the

time when the recording studios were turning out some fine technical sounds, with "lush" orchestral arrangements backing up the up-and-coming singers of the day.

As Bob Hope said at this time:
TIMES ARE LEAN FOR CROSBY
RECORD COLLECTORS.

The years were rolling by and Bing was missing out on good technical advances and superb orchestral arranging. It was a tremendous pity that Bing decided to cut back on his recording activities but as he explained to me both verbally and in correspondence, it was entirely his own clear-cut decision. It is something to be thankful for that he taped so many recordings for radio purposes in the 1950s. Good use has been made of these.

FRUSTRATING RECORDING EXPERIENCE:

Most home-based members will have heard Alan Dell's tribute to Geo-Gershwin in his SOUNDS EASY programme on July 10 with Bing's contribution of HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON?

Now I've something to say about this particular recording for on my equipment Bing's voice sounds on what I term the 'thin' side. Moreover, the 'echo' involved also takes part of the voice away. I happened to be in the Angel Studios in London when this recording was being remastered as was a similar-sounding record, ISLE OF CAPRI.

Sitting close to the assistant recording engineer, Frank Barreta, I noted his hand on a particular control which did indeed control the 'sound' of Bing, i.e. one way brought in a deeper tone and the other effected this 'thinner' tone. This chap in charge settled for this latter sound for obviously it met with his personal ear and satisfaction. But for me, I was bursting to ask if he would bring in the deeper sounding Bing voice which I believe most members, with me, prefer. However, not knowing too much about sound-recording at this high level, I kept my mouth shut - alas. But ever since I have wished that I had spoken up. All is not lost for me, however, for I find the 'loudness' switch on my amplifier goes a long way to restoring the more familiar Crosby sound.

And on matters apertaining to the radio, I learn from Alan Dell that the Crosby radio material he broadcasts always brings a big response from listeners. So much so that he is repeating some of his items; listeners it would seem particularly like Bing as he was on the radio.

Do I ever correspond with Dorothy Lamour? was the question put to me by JOHN FISHER, Head of Variety at Thames Television in a letter of 13 July. John, members may know, used to be at the BBC Before moving over to ITV. While at the BBC though I had a hand in so many things John Fisher produced - The Palladium, Record Sessions, Wogan, a couple of Parkinson shows, BBC Disneytime which Bing compered and so on. Anyway, John's letter read:

"Dear Leslie,

I have happy memories of our working association on THE PARKINSON SHOW. There is no doubt that Bing would not have appeared with Michael had it not been for you! Also I shall always thank you for the help you gave me with my book, CALL THEM IRREPLACEABLE.

Do you ever correspond with Dorothy Lamour? I only ask because I am now responsible for the DES O'CONNOR SHOW and it struck me that a duet/medley featuring Des and Dorothy could provide a wonderful tribute to Bing. I believe she is still well, looking good, and performing when she wants to.

Trust this finds you in good health, and thank you again. With every good wish, Yours,

JOHN FISHER, Head of Variety.
Thames
TV

In common with all members I am always saddened to read of the passing of our members. The death of the comparatively young BOB JONES, of Jarrow was a savage blow. And I was also grieved to learn of the passing of BERT SAUNDERS of Slough in the previous issue. For years there was always his Christmas greeting card and his appreciative letters to me regarding my close involvement with Bing. I happened to be on the London Underground one day and, astonishingly, met up with Bert.

And finally a word of cheer to our Bangor member, ARNOLD BAKER, coupled with the sincere hope that he regains his former good health as soon as possible.

Arnold has been most helpful and cooperative to so many over the years - and a 100 per cent Bing man if ever there was one.

My greetings to all.

LESLIE GAYLOR

Editor: Leslie as interesting and revealing as always. The news that Geoff Love conducted for Bing on the Longines set was really a stunner. The man we all hitherto thought was the MD must have been a kind of musical 'overseer' for Longines, contracting out to various conductors and orchestras for the basic tracks requir . The man in question is, of course, MISCHEL PIASTRO. And this revelation unfortunately would seem to put many discographies in error, even BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD, for all discographies name M, PIASTRO. However, all this led us to check on the actual Longines set and to our astonishment we find the name Piastro is NOT mentioned anywhere, either on the records themselves or on the pack aging. We seem to recall that the name was used on literature announcing the set.

It will also be recalled that the set caused a deal of controversy and dis appointment on issue. The impression was given that Bing sang ALL the songs on ALL the records. This was certainly NOT the case, for Bing sang only on usually three tracks per side. Representations must have been made to Longines for the set was subsequently reissued with Bing singing more items.

And no one will need to be told that clearly with these accompanying tracks being recorded in London, Bing added his voice in the States. And as the records were made and packaged in England, it is a remarkably involved story.

> ADDING HIS VOICE TO ALREADY LAID-DOWN ACCOMPANIMENTS WAS BY NO MEANS A MODERN GIMMICK! AS FAR BACK AS JANUARY 1933 BING ADDED HIS "YOU'RE GETTING TO BE A HABIT WITH ME" AND "I'M YOUNG AND HEALTHY" to ACCOMPANIMENTS ALREADY RECORDED BY GUY LOMBARDO & HIS BAND.

But we certainly had the impression all these years that the Longines project was an American concept. Seems it was British after all!

We've probably mentioned it before, but GEOFF LOVE is certainly a busy musician and director who has made, literally, scores of albums for various EMI labels. He is MANUEL AND THE MUSIC OF THE MOUNTAINS for example, as well as the BIG BEN BANJO BAND, MD for several prominent artists, including Max Bygraves when the latter appears on TV

And to Leslie's comments re. the emergence of "lush" arrangements in the 50s and 60s, coupled with the emergence of people like Henry Mancini, Nelson Riddle, Don Costa, and others, I find it easy to understand that Bing often contemplated retirement. By the early 50s he had already been the most prominent popular singer in the world for 25 years. Perhaps he was getting a little weary after the monthly visits to Decca, squeezed in between films and radio, all through that quarter of a century.

Again, he is remembered as saying he was getting too old to "win the girl" in films! And underlying it all was the feeling he felt it was time to travel on safari, play golf, fish, and so on. And who could have blamed him, especially as in 1954 he completed his exceptional contract with Decca which had run non-stop for 20 years?

Happily, although he was (as it were) released from the "grind" of regular record-

Bing did make the occasional album when the project interested him. And the odd film - until the remarkable HIGH SOCIETY came along.

And Bing was certainly well aware of the "newer fellas" jostling for the limelight! Como, Sinatra, Damone, Laine, Mitchell and so on....

However, we're merely speculating; it is true that many of us did get the impression Bing was content to let his career run down..... but the old spirit prevailed !

Perhaps Bing's out look on his career is well illustrated in a piece we've just read again from the American press.

COLUMBO, the off-beat detective has recently been on our TV screens again, happily! Not caring for the usual "who-dunnits" we nevertheless always make a point of watching Peter Falk's great characterisation, far-fetched as the plots invariably are. The way he leads his "victim" to think he is an incompetent oaf is truly delightful - we think so, anyway.

How would Bing have been in the part of this eccentric sleuth? For the truth is Bing was approached to play the part many years ago.

Executive producer - WILLIAM LINK recently stated:

"We needed a unique cop. Dick and I had both read CRIME AND PUNISHMENT. In it the character of Petrovich was a very dogged, unpretentious, down-to-earth detective. There were things about that man we saw we could use in a contemporary setting. And that was the birth of 'Columbo'."

That Columbo, said Link, was played by Burt Freed, a character actor, A later Columbo, played by the late Thomas Mitchell, turned up in a play Link and Levinson wrote, 'Prescription for Murder'. THEN CAME THE SERIES FOR UNIVERSAL, AND, said LINK, HIS FIRST CHOICE FOR THE ROLE WAS BING CROSBY, "BUT HE TURNED IT DOWN. HE WANTED TO PLAY GOLF."

Had Bing accepted the role those many years ago it might have given a new twist to THE SINGING DETECTIVE the night-marish serial run by the BBC recently.

But it would have been another non-singing role for Bing - something this writer could not get excited about, remembering Bing's other non-singing role in the remake of STAGECOACH, not forgetting either DR. COOK'S GARDEN.....

Falk, of course, was the benefactor when Bing turned down the role, and has been synonymous with the character ever since. Yet another series is planned, to show just how popular the programme is.

Try as I will, I just cannot imagine Bing as the old rain-coated slightly scruffy detective who, nevertheless, always shows great perspicacity! Perhaps its because Peter Falk has, deservedly, made such a success of the role.

But we recall this simply to illustrate Bing's diffidence about his career..... golf had priority !

TO MANY ENQUIRERS: We have no news from JOHN MARSHALL regarding any forthcoming social events. Should any arrive before this issue is complete it will, of course, be included.

LET MICHAEL CRAMPTON KNOW AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE IF YOU WILL BE ATTENDING (see page 5) We omitted to mention on that page that those attending are very welcome to bring records, books, andother Crosbyana for sale/exchange.

"There was a time, not so long ago, when most male persons between the ages of 15 and 50 could come up with a more or less recognisable imitation of Bing Crosby. Some of still can - and chuck in a Mills Brothers vocal backing for good measure...but the truth is, of course, that no popular artist has ever concealed his art quite so successfully as The Old Groaner:... (Radio item)...

NEW YORK, NEW YORK!

"Heading east by way of Cleveland, we wound up in New York, where the team of Rinker and Crosby ran into a giant road block. We went on at the Paramount and did exactly what we'd been doing in all the cities, in which - to be immodest - we'd killed the citizens, but in New York, with the same songs, sung the same way, we died. I couldn't explain it then. I can't now. We sang the same stuff we'd put on our records, which had sold well. Whatever it was, the big city didn't want any part of us.

"We were prepared to go back to Los Angeles or even to Spokane. If we'd never got anywhere or done anything, the blow wouldn't have been so lethal. But to come to New York, the pinnacle of show business, full of hope and confidence, and end up with egg on our faces, just standing there in our high-button shoes with our teeth in our mouths, was heartbreak.

"Pops Whiteman stuck with us for a show or two, but after that he was driven to various dodges to keep us active....."

THUS Bing, in his book CALL ME LUCKY, describing what must certainly have been the only time in his career that he got the "bird" - he wasn't received with fervent acclaim. True he wasn't singing solo, but he was clearly massively disconcerted (and no doubt was Paul Whiteman) both at the time and almost 30 years later when he wrote CALL ME LUCKY. It is difficult to understand what was wrong and one can well imagine Bing's bewilderment - with talk of he and Al Rinker going back home to Spokane!

This was about 1928 and as the reproduction opposite graphically demonstrates, the situation had dramatically changed a bare 3 years later. Bing must have been almost as bewildered as in 1928 - but delightedly so. And this wouldhave been before THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1932 film.

The film advertised, TOUCHDOWN! may have been "forced to hold over " for a 2nd big week but is now completely lost in the mists of time; its star, however, Richard Arlen is probably remembered-he later appeared in a film called THE CROONER all about a dance band singer and Bing's voice was actually heard briefly in it. You will note also the appearance of Bing's great friend, Jack Oakie, in the TOUCHDOWN! film (presumably a football film).

And also on stage - wonderful days those- cine-variety they called it when you got the best of both worlds, cinema and stage - you will note those other great friends and colleagues of Bing 's - THE MILLS BROTHERS "Radio's New Rhythm Novelty".

They, with many others, were of course all brought together in THE BIG BROADCAST FILM, the first generation, it might be said, of world-famous stars owing so much to radio. The illustrious Mills Brothers have never received the accol-

(Cont. page 14)

NEW YORK TIMES SQUARE

Paramount

FORCED TO HOLD OVER!

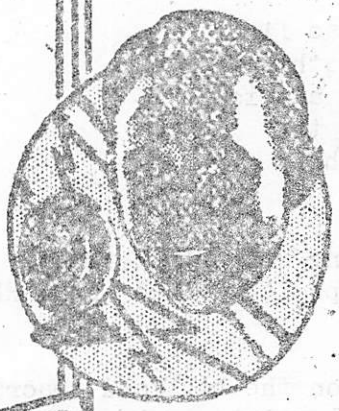
The Greatest Stage and Screen Show That Ever Hit Broadway! Audiences Actually Cheer The Year's Smash Screen Entertainment!

2nd BIG WEEK!

TOUCHDOWN!

A Paramount Picture Written by Francis Wallace with

RICHARD ARLEN PEGGY SHANNON
REGIS TOOMEY JACK OAKIE



— On the Stage —

Headliners of Radio, Stage & Screen!

RADIO'S NEW SENSATION
BING CROSBY
Romantic singer of songs you love

THE MILLS BROS.
Radio's New Rhythm Novelty

HARRIET HOCTOR
Former Ziegfeld "Follies" Star

AMEDA & BUBENOFF

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FRIDAY [illegible] 20 NOV 1931 NEW YORK TIMES

ade they deserved though, of course, they do still have hordes of admirers all over the world. And they had a truly historic association with Bing which extended over radio, records, films and TV; remember they repeated that terrific version of DINAH in 1976 at Bing's 50th anniversary programme at Pasadena 44 years after their original performance. This illustrates the esteem Bing held for them.

> They were true brothers and the 'novelty' tage was because, so originally, apart from their jazz singing they imitated instruments such as trumpet, trombone and saxophone with remarkable authenticity. Their early records carried the legend:
>
> "Apart from one guitar, no other musical instruments are used on these recordings."

And the guitar, played by eldest brother John, together with his ultra-bass voice accompaniment, supplied the "rhythm section" for the quartet. Sadly, when they were really riding high in 1935 John died. It was said the remaining three were so disconsolate they considered ending the act but their father, John Senior, had the inspiration to join the act replacing his son. And so they carried on as a quartet, all through the years as did Bing, never giving a poor performance. Indeed, many years after their start they had million-sellers like GLOW-WORM, PAPER DOLL, CAB-DRIVER and many others. They, like Bing, survived the rock 'n'roll madness and carried on making 'modern' albums. They dropped their instrument impressions largely, and also like Bing, adopted a more mature, balladeering style though never totally forsaking the rhythmic approach. Over such a long period they made hundreds of records.

> In the course of time, John Senior also fied; and just a couple of years ago another brother - they had been performing for years as a trio. But it now seems they have yielded to the natural course of events and ceased their great musical careers.

Their three historic commercial recordings with Bing were DINAH, SHINE, and MY HONEY'S LOVIN' ARMS; and there were radio-excerpt items like LAZY RHYTHM and PAPER DOLL.

We have no knowledge of the lady, HARRIET HOCTOR, on the bill and described as "Former Ziegfeld 'Follies' Star." But in small print can be seen the names of the husband/wife cinema organ duo, MR. AND MRS. JESSE CRAWFORD.

At the Brooklyn Paramount concurrently was the same film, with the star, RICHARD ARLEN, making personal appearances. On stage was that other fine radio star, KATE SMITH "Song-Bird of the South" - remembered so well for her original big hit, WHEN THE MOON COMES OVER THE MOUNTAIN.

Obviously there must be still many people who can recall these historical appearances of Bing at the New York Paramount Cinemas though they will almost certainly be in their 'Seventies. Do any of our Stateside members know of anyone who did indeed see Bing at that time ?

DISCS AND Records

..until recently the two words were virtually synonymous. The situation is changing fairly rapidly now, however, thanks to

ADVANCE OF THE CD!

There is no doubt now that the Compact Disc is rapidly gaining ground. The shops were already showing that audio cassettes were beginning to oust the more orthodox long-playing records. Now the stocks of CDs seem to be growing almost daily.

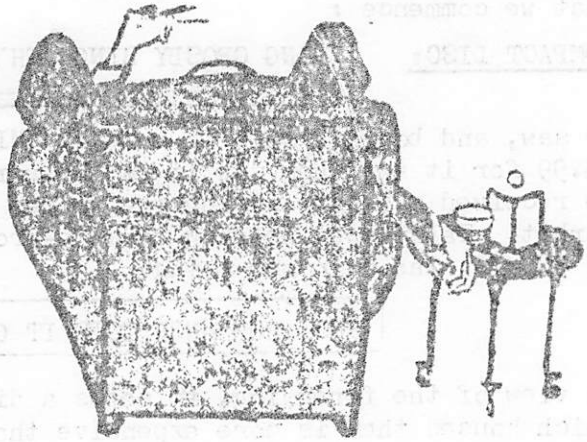
The news is delightful, even exciting, to those who have taken the plunge and entered the CD field, and according to letters received the number who now enjoy this latest means of sound reproduction is also growing rapidly. Many do view this development with irritation, even chagrin, claiming that they are not going to spend around £200 pound just to avoid the odd click and surface hiss by replacing their existing, splendid, collection which sounds great on their existing equipment with CDs. A fair attitude and fully understandable, especially as financial considerations must inevitably enter into the situation.

> And there has been "scare" stories in the media recently to the effect that 'everlasting CDs may not be so everlasting, after all!' Seems there is opinion that believes the ink used to print details on the non-playing side of these shiny little discs will eat into the aluminium and ruin the disc!

Time alone will tell; seems a far-fetched view to us though. And, of course, another aspect is that LPs will continue to be played and enjoyed for the forseeable future. It cannot be imagined that Bing's entire output, or that of it which has appeared on LP, will also now be transferred to Compact Discs, desirable as that prospect will seem to those who have been "converted".

It is a cause for satisfaction that Bing is now well represented on this new medium - remember

NEW ISSUES :



track EVENTS

that fears were expressed that if Bing did NOT appear on CD it would be a tragedy for posterity. For the greatest popular voice of the 20th century not to be so enshrined would be unthinkable. That is not now going to happen for Crosby CDs are appearing in increasing volume. And it is with these that we commence :

COMPACT DISC: "BING CROSBY SINGS THE GREAT SONGS" PICKWICK (PWK) 065

We saw, and bought, this CD in W.H. SMITH's and were quite pleased for we paid £3.99 for it and then saw it in Woolworth's at £4.99p! A few days later, though, we received a letter saying the writer had bought this CD for £2.75 - in a supermarket! Talk about needing to shop-around! But this situation does raise several points, the main one being:

JUST HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO PRODUCE A COMPACT DISC?

In view of the foregoing, it seems a distinct possibility that the perspex case which houses them is more expensive than the disc! And there has already been considerable mystery as to how these CDs come about - we have them made in W. Germany, France and Japan. Now this one, produced by one of the largest independent companies, Pickwick International (Great Britain) under license from MCA Records, is made in - Sweden!

There are 16 well-varied tracks on this disc, giving a total playing time of 49 minutes 11 seconds, tho' this may vary slightly according to your player. Even so, even at the highest price of £4.99 this represents astonishing value, being much cheaper than an LP. The tracks are as follows, and we have added the recording dates to show how extensive the date-range is:

1. Begin the beguine (1944)
2. A fine romance (1936 with Dixie Lee)
3. Night and Day (1944)
4. I've got you under my skin (1947)
5. Who's sorry now? (1945)
6. On the sunny side of the Street (1946)
7. Swinging on a star (1944)
8. Stardust (1939)
9. These foolish things (1944)
10. Danny boy (1941)
11. Summertime (1938)
12. Personality (1946)
13. Pennies from Heaven (1936)
14. Memories are made of this (1956)
15. September song (1943)
16. Ol' man river (1955)

Four from the 30s; 10 from the 40s, and 2 from the 50s. It would be difficult to compile a more varied selection - and needless to say in view of what we have many times said about compact discs - these tracks are heard here as they have never been heard before! Oldest is 1936 - latest 20 years on in 1956.

It represents extraordinary value too. Far better value than an orthodox LP. Which reminds us to say there IS an LP entitled BING SINGS THE GREAT SONGS but it is pure coincidence; this CD is an entirely different collection, as can be seen. A wonderful development at an astonishing price. "Jacket" is quite neat, largely white with blue print and a gently coloured drawing of Bing head and shoulders. Let's hope Pickwick get the sales they deserve and come up with some more at this price!

COMPACT DISC: BING CROSBY: FEELS GOOD, FEELS RIGHT LONDON (DECCA) 820 586-2

"Special Price £7.49p"

Yes, Decca weighs in on its London label with this compact disc, which is a repeat of the LP of the same title (SKL 5261) BUT, with three additional tracks which have only appeared hitherto on the Decca double album, BING 1975/6 - 1931. Fifteen tracks, therefore, one less than the Pickwick above, but around double the price. Even so, at £7.49 (and it may vary from shop to shop) it is well below the "around £12.00" that most CDs cost just a short while ago. The titles, therefore, are:

1. Feels good, feels right.
2. Once in a while
3. As time goes by
4. Old-fashioned love
5. Time on my hands.
6. The way we were.
7. There's nothing that I haven't sung about.
8. The night is young and you're so beauti-
9. Nevertheless(I'm in love with you)(ful
10. The rose in her hair
11. What's new?
12. When I leave the world behind
13. That old blac magic.
14. I'm getting sentimental over you.
15. At last.

All the titles were recorded in July or August of 1976; we've listed the titles as if two sides but, of course, all 15 play consecutively on one side of the CD - which is their fashion.

As said above, produced by Decca (London) this CD was made in West Germany! It has a very full, folding, jacket, with sleeve notes by John Tracy, who is making quite a nostalgia name around the various companies. I must confess, however, his lengthy notes on this collection are just about the most obscure and difficult to read I've ever come across. For me, they want some deciphering.

> And there is a particular significance about this for yours truly: reading Ken Barnes's book, THE CROSBY YEARS, and his criticism of this album, not to mention several others, demonstrated to me that Ken's views and mine were too divergent ever to be compatible - and certainly not to coincide.

This album convinced me that ALAN COHEN was by far the best musical director to have worked with Bing in the 70s; his arrangements were intensely musical, imaginative and brilliantly executed. But in Mr. Barnes's view:

> "The orchestral backings by Alan Cohen are adequately skilful as far as the nostalgic market is concerned, but he is definitely the wrong man when it comes to providing contemporary accompaniments. For example, a fine modern song like THE WAY WE WERE call for something more than the sluggish rhythm pattern that shows up in the second half of this version. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LESS EMBARRASSING IF THE ENTIRE ARRANGEMENT HAD STAYED AS A 'RUBATO' READING."

I have added the capitsls; well, that is Ken's opinion and he's entitled to it. But my view of what he wrote is quite brief: BOSH! The arrangement Cohen scored for the song is, I submit, eminently appropriate. In fact, a reluctant criticism would be that it is TOO modern in that the emphasised drumming so clearly audible is not really necessary to the performance.

Again, Ken Barnes continued:

> "Generally speaking, it is hard to imagine that this album was recorded in 1976. Maybe it was Cohen's brief to provide old-fashioned backings - so perhaps the faults lie elsewhere in this instance. But even on a nostalgic level, was it really necessary to include such a rusty and creaking old warhorse as THE ROSE IN HER HAIR? Its possible that even composer Harry Warren would wish to forget this one. What possible commercial or artistic relevance could it have in 1976?"

Bosh is not a nice word; I shouldn't have used it. But it is applicable again here. In fact, you could substitute RUBBISH!

> Is it possible, I wonder, that Bing himself liked THE ROSE IN HER HAIR? I most certainly do and I warmly applaud Cohen's imaginative, highly melodious arrangement. And the inspiration of using a harmonic (not by any means my favourite instrument!) was, I felt, pure genius.

In fact, there is just one track on this superb album I do not care for, and that is the title song, FEELS GOOD, FEELS RIGHT. Melody is virtually non-existent, the words dreadfully contrived and altogether its a waste of album space. Yet Mr. Barnes describes it thus:

> "...no one can deny the sheer relish with which he tackles the clever and highly attractive title song."

My word! But it all goes to show how opinions can be at opposite ends of the spectrum. Ken Barnes always exhibits and extols the "modern" sound, or the contemporary sound which is, I suppose, his policy (whatever the terms mean) as a record producer. But Bing wasn't a modern man! How could he be, in his 'Seventies? His sheer artistry and professionalism enabled him to 'deliver' on what might be termed 'modern' and 'contemporary' arrangements and songs. But did he believe in them? I think not.

> Bing had, through the sheer length of his career, outlived all his mentors - brother Everett, Jack Kapp, brothers except Bob, John Scott Trotter - ah, JST! Is it not facile to imagine that Bing found himself performing in, if not a hostile world, at least an alien one where music (and thus his singing) was concerned? I think so.

As a matter of interest, long before I read Barnes's book, I found myself wishing that Bing had made many more tracks with Alan Cohen - a.d it was also interesting to read in es Gaylor's columns that Bing did intend to show his loyalty to Decca by not sign ing any exclusive contracts with other companies. So, but for the tragedy which ensued, it is almost certain we would indeed have had the intense pleasure of hearing Bing again with the quite splendid Cohen arrangements, direction, and musicians.

A further point is that Barnes was highly critical of several other Crosby albums; in fact, its not difficult to come to believe he would criticise most albums he hadn't produced !

Putting all that controversy aside, one is tempted to feel that records were coming so thick and fast in the mid-70s that we didn't really digest them sufficiently! What a clever song is THERE'S NOTHING THAT I HAVEN'T SUNG ABOUT; I wonder if anyone has taken the trouble to listen and jot down all the song titles mentioned, or even inferred?

The coda to WHEN I LEAVE THE WORLD BEHIND (what a song for Bing in his declining years) is, for me, highly dramatic and in its way, quite moving. I can only repeat, I find Alan Cohen a skilful and inspirational arranger.

And what a fine rhythmic number is OLD-FASHIONED LOVE! Bing enjoyed singing this 'rocker' as he did ROSE IN HER HAIR - he liked 'Southern' songs, even pseudo ones!

The three tracks additional to the 12 on the LP of the same name are THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC, I'M GETTING SENTIMENTAL OVER YOU, and AT LAST.

> Incidentally, what we have been calling the "jacket" on CDs is termed the "inlay" - and this one, in addition to notes as mentioned by John Tracey, includes two photographs - those on the sleeves of BINGO VINYO and A SOUTHERN MEMOIR. Altogether, a well-produced and well-presented little package with playing time of 45 mins. 56 secs - say 46 minutes. The picture on the front is exactly the same as on the LP FEELS GOOD but naturally reduced in size.

Resuming with more usual tracks (we dare not say 'mundane'!):

"THE BOB HOPE COLLECTION": HIS GOLDEN GREATS — DEJA VU DVLP 2124

Here is an unusual, if not indeed odd, collection! One thinks chiefly of Bob as a comedian. But he had, of course, a tolerable singing voice as his famed duets with Bing demonstrated so often. And this album reminds us he had quite a vogue at one time (and some good songs) with film star Shirley Ross. His voice is even more tolerable when you consider some of the incredible sounds offered today as "singing". We often think the word must have a new meaning!

> Even so, Golden Greats is stretching things a bit, surely? And to make up the "collection" heavy support was needed from other artists. In fact our interest in this album is purely the Crosby content; and Bing is strongly featured in eight of the 18 tracks. There is even a Bing item you may not have previously heard.

This is the shiny-black sleeved label with the gold and white printing, originating in Italy (Milano) and has done a good job in featuring vintage artists including Bing. Prices as always these days vary but we paid £3.99. Title details are:

1. Penthouse Serenade. (duet with Shirley Ross)
2. Thanks for the memory " " " "
3. Two sleepy people (duet with Bing Crosby, alternate take) - alas, this is a printing mistake on the sleeve: it is Shirley Ross, not Bing!)
4. The lady's in love with you (Duet with Shirley Ross)
5. Road to Bali (Duet with Bing Crosby)
6. Merry-go-round (with Bing Crosby and Peggy Lee - this is, of course, The Merry Go Run Around)
7. Hoot Mon (duet with Bing Crosby)
8. Chicago style (duet with Bing Crosby)

Side 2:

1. Wing Ding tonight.
2. Buttons and bows.
3. Two sleepy people (duet with Shirley Ross - alternate take)
4. The lady's in love with you (duet with Shirley Ross - alternate take)

(Cont. over...

5. How d'ya like to love me? (Duet with Martha Raye)
6. Put it there, pal (Duet with Bing Crosby)
7. Road to Morocco (Duet with Bing Crosby)
8. Road to Morocco (with Dorothy Lamour and Bing Crosby)
9. Buttons and bows (Duet with Bing Crosby)
10. You're the top (with Frank Sinatra & Bing Crosby).

Items 8, 9 and 10 on side two are radio items which you may not have heard. No. 8 could have been entitled "Remember the road to Morocco?" for that is the way the trio parody the song. Similarly, No. 9 (Buttons and Bows, probably Bob's biggest hit) was also a radio parody with Bing - and ditto with No. 10, You're the Top. All in good quality.

Quite a musical album (and no doubt its needless for us to say this is a normal LP and not a CD) though the Crosby commercial tracks are anything but new for most of us.

BING CROSBY: THE DANCE BAND DAYS: "DANCING IN THE DARK" DBD 14 £3.99p

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(Distributed by PRISM LEISURE CORPORATION, 1 Baird Rd., Enfield, Midd'x)

Several members have reported picking up this LP though we have not yet been successful in spotting it. It is a 20-track LP with the following titles all from the period 1931 to 1935:

Side 1:	Side 2:
1. When the blue of the night (sic)	1. Please
2. I found a million-dollar baby	2. June in January
3. I guess it had to be that way.	3. Out of nowhere
4. Dancing in the dark	4. Now that you're gone
5. Goodnight, sweetheart	5. I'm through with love
6. With every breath I take	6. Two for tonight
7. Too late	7. The day you came along
8. Here lies love	8. I'm sorry, dear
9. Sweet and lovely	9. If you should ever need me
10. Lazy day.	10. Brother can you spare a dime?

Well, this is authentic, vintage, grass-roots Bing all right! Several of the titles have become available recently on Living Era and Saville records.

JOHN LAWSON of Wallasey wrote: "20 titles from 1931 to 1935 including TWO FOR TONIGHT, my only reason for buying it. The sound quality is not very good as is to be expected on a 20-track LP."

> Well now, we cannot comment on the sound quality for, as stated above, we do not as yet have the album. But John's condemnatory statement about 20-track LPs is a surprise. We have many LPs of good 'name', e.g. Decca, EMI, RCA bearing 20 tracks and the quality doesn't suffer thereby - nor should it except, possibly, in the long-term.

We intend to obtain the album as soon as possible - whatever !

The readers of THE STAGE and TELEVISION TODAY obviously don't subscribe to that publication for advance record news - at least, we hope they don't! It got around to publishing a review of the 10th ANNIVERSARY SET - on June 30 last! Remember, it was issued last October 14th....still, they used a nice headline to make amends: "TRIBUTE TO THE GREATEST POP SINGER OF THEM ALL"

BING CROSBY & THE RYTHM BOYS

ARCADIA 5001

This new release contains a recently discovered prize: a 1930 radio transcription of BING CROSBY & THE RHYTHM BOYS which was part of an L. A. variety show hosted by Walter O'Keefe. The broadcast took place prior to when The Rhythm Boys moved into the Cocoanut Grove. Selections include a great version of A BENCH IN THE PARK and a tune never previously heard by the trio - EVERYTHING'S AGREED UPON.

The following artists, mostly with hos accompaniments, round out the album:

James Stewart (1931) - DAY AFTER DAY
Rudy Vallee (1930) - SHE LOVES ME JUST THE SAME
EDDIE CANTOR (1931) - THERE'S NOTHING TOO GOOD FOR MY BABY
THE INK SPOTS (1935) - SWINGIN' ON THE STRINGS/YOUR FEET'S TOO BIG/DON'T 'LOW NO SWINGIN' IN HERE/SWING, GATE, SWING.
RUTH ETTING (Freshman Love 1931) - LOVE IS LIKE THAT/HE'S FUNNY THAT WAY
CHICK BULLOCK & THE MEMPHIS NIGHTHAWKS (1932) - MY GAL SAL/DARK DOWN STRUTTER'S BALL.

Arcadia Records,
760 Brower Street,
Memphis, TN 38111, USA

ALL PRICES INCLUDE POSTAGE: $8.75 / $10.75 (Canada)
$11.50 (Elsewhere)

The above is reproduced precisely as received from the States; as we have not heard the album this is neither endorsement nor adverse criticism. It is certainly something for the really dedicated collector. Finding a Bing/Rhythm Boys' broadcast is indeed a discovery. Remember that fine air-shot of Bing at the Cocoanut Grove that came out 2-3 years ago?

11.50 dollars, at current exchange rate, is approx. £6.75p, very "budget"! including postage, as it does.

If we knew at the time it had gone completely from our minds, so we were more than surprised when a single - TRUE LOVE/YOURS, by Bing (duetting with Rosemary Clooney on the first-named) - came our way thro' the courtesy of member Maurice Beardmore of Derby.

The two tracks come, of course, from the 10th Anniversary Set and were clearly a promotional project which, perhaps, never got off the ground The record is the Warwick label, and the number SW1005. One recalls the single of TRUE LOVE which was Top of the Hit Parade for week after week in 1956 - and this must be of historical value for surely there will never be another 'single' of Bing? And did Rosemary Clooney, we wonder, bite her lip that Grace Kelly, a non-singer, got a gold disc with it!

Reverting to the compact disc BING CROSBY SINGS THE GREAT SONGS released by Pickwick (see page 16 this issue) L. BRICE, 40 Crown Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 1AT was one of those who wrote to the company and got the following encouraging, even enthusiastic reply:

MR. L. Brice. 15th August, 1988

Dear Mr. Brice,

Many thanks for your letter regarding the realse of BING SINGS THE GREAT SONGS.

We have had quite a few similar letters and can confirm that, in February next year, there will be another CD and cassette release of Bing, entitled BING SINGS MORE GREAT SONGS.

There will also be a new Christmas compilation out in October this year, entitled "Christmas with Bing", again incorporating tracks not released for some time by MCA or in any other format.

We do appreciate our customers' comments and once again thank you for yours.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN HOWARD,
International A & R Manager.

PICKWICK GROUP PLC
The Hyde Industrial Estate,
The Hyde,
LONON NW9 6JU

This certainly demonstrates the value of taking the time to drop a line thanking a company for its issues. Obviously feedback such as this is helpful to them even if the more potent fadtor is the sales figure per computer!

> We have written to Pickwick on more than one occasion and have always had a courteous, informative reply.

The news that this concern will be making an October Christmas CD release is particularly pleasing as is the one planned for next February.

MOST ENCOURAGING OF ALL IS THE FACT THAT SO MANY COMPANIES ARE STILL KEEN ON ISSUING CROSBY ALBUMS AND DISCS. Looking back over the past year there has been quite a number.

AND THERE IS TRULY STARTLING NEWS FROM AMERICAN CBS, via BERT DAY OF Dalbeattie, concerning the reissue of the CROSBY COLLECTION, no less than 65 titles of the earliest Bing from 1928 to 1934 (when he switched to Decca, of course) If we remember rightly, this issue is to be in COMPACT DISC form; we certainly hope so for the selections have long been available in micro-groove (LP) form. This, it will be remembered, is the work of one MICHAEL BROOKS.

JUST AS STARTLING IS THE NEWS THAT "BING'S HOLLYWOOD" is to be reissued - again we pray in CD form. And Volume 7 is likely to beissued first 'out of turn' as it is HOLIDAY INN and this year, as you are well aware, saw the 100th birthday of the master-songwriter, IRVING BERLIN. Good things are assuredly on the way!

WENT FISHIN' AND BING CAME DOWN BY THE RIVER TOO!

BY DENNIS BARKER (Yorksley, Glos.)

Chatting with some friends in my local a couple of weeks ago, I happened to mention that I was planning a fishing trip. Some enthusiasm was shewn about joining me. The enthusiasm waxed and it was finally arranged that an eighteen-seater mini-bus could be hired to take us down to Symonds Yat. What the name means I don't know but many will know that this is a particularly splendid beauty-spot in these parts. That same day that the arrangement was decided upon I got home and decided that a tape of Bing singing about rivers and the sea, which could be played whilst we were travelling, was the order of the day - and for that matter, a good idea!

The morning of departure for our trip I heard someone calling my name - it turned out to be Don Adams who had decided to come on the trip- but more of Don later. Fishing gear aboard the bus and away we went.

The Bing tape was promptly set in motion and his voice accompanied us down the green lanes to the river - and to the local hostelry!

We made ourselves at home pretty quickly there and when all were settled everyone in our company kept asking to hear the Bing tape again. The inn-keeper was asked if he could supply a cassette player and lead so that we could sit and listen to him on the large verandah overlooking the River Wye. The landlord happily supplied the necessary and Bing's voice was echoing over the water in splendid style.

> IN A SHORT WHILE IT WAS NOTICEABLE THAT PEOPLE ON HOLIDAY - THAT PART OF THE WYE VALLEY IS A POPULAR HOLIDAYING SPOT - WERE TAKING NOTICE. IN FACT, MANY CAME CLOSER WITH THEIR DRINKS (and picnics generally), SAT DOWN AND CLEARLY ENJOYED THE MASTER'S VOICE!

The atmosphere engendered got Don Adams in the mood to recall certain anecdotes - you may recall I hope that Don, now in his 70s, played guitar and sang the vocals with a good class dance band on ocean-going liners when a young man. One such memory was to the effect that when the pianist of Don's band was rehearsing one day, Bing happened to stroll in (he had made friends with the boys in the bands almost immediately) and the pianist said: "Hey Bing! What do you think of this?" and he produced a piece of sheet-music bearing Bing's photograph.

> BING LOOKED AT IT WITH INTEREST - AND SAID: "MY, I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS SO GOOD-LOOKING WHEN YOUNGER!"

On another occasion Bing had some fun with a violinist in the band. This chap always made a point of packing his instrument away most carefully after a band session. Most instrumentalists do, of course, but Bing got to know this chap was particularly fastidious and one day, seeing him walking past with his case under his arm asked: "Have you lost your violin, then?"

> The fiddler looked stricken and immediately opened his case. His violin was there, of course. Crestfallen, the fiddler said: "Bing! You dawg you!" But enjoyed the laugh.

Such was the easy-going attitude Bing adopted with musicians with no hint of condescension from the great man.

A memory of an altogether different kind concerned an occasion when Don was in

Jack Dempsey's Bar in New York. Bing was being interviewed on televison and the interviewer asked:

> "Bing, why don't you stand for senator for California? You never know - you might make President!"
>
> Bing's reply was rather startling, delivered in quite a sombre tone: "I can't - I've been had up for drunken driving..."
>
> Bing was referring to that long-ago occasion during the making of KING OF JAZZ. It was an extremely interesting interview, Don recalled.

The day went with a real swing; everybody enjoyed it, especially the music. Oh, I nearly forgot! Yes, we did some fishing and I think Bing was really with us for I actually caught a couple! Consensus of opinion is that we must certainly repeat the day's outing - so I'm already preparing new Crosby tapes! Let's hope the weather turns fine for us.

Editor: Delightful - as is Symonds Yat. Know the venue well...as will many members. Glad Dennis remembered the fishing....

Our previous information on DON ADAMS concerns the time he was singing with the band and out of the corner of his eye spotted Bing about to enter the ball-room - noting that Don was singing he turned and went out. Much disturbed at the time, Don was considerably mollified when he later learned from the purser of the ship that Bing, who always 'stopped the show' on entering the ballroom or the restaurant and got a warm reception from the other passengers, hadn't wanted to steal Don's thunder. Hence his quiet departure.

DID YOU KNOW? : BING CROSBY started his stage career as part of a mind-reading act.

(From a Northern newspaper recently).

HOW DO THEY THINK THESE THINGS UP ? On the other hand, who knows ? Perhaps Al Rinker and Harry Barris....no, its impossible !

ANOTHER REPLY TO MANY MEMBERS: At the time of writing we have no news of Volume 11 (Eleven) of THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY. Should it turn up - we'll include details.

"THE BEST LIKED, best-known, and best-paid singer in the world is BING CROSBY. He is the person most deserving of the appellative "a truly typical American", or "Uncle Sam without the Whiskers", or "Mister America". Comparable to the late Will Rogers, Bing has truly captured the hearts of America's millions, for his unique and flexible manner of musical utterances possesses unparalleled mass appeal, and his appeal is not confined to any class nor age. Indeed, his popularity is not confined to America, for it is validly stated that his voice has been heard by, and is readily recognised and enjoyed by, more people than any other voice in the history of the human race...he has achieved an unprecedented and deserved popularity in the world's musical scene.....

(Opening remarks in: "BING CROSBY and THE BING CROSBY STYLE" by Dr. Mize; published 1946.)

STATESIDE DESPATCHES

AMERICAN MEMBERS PITCHING IN!

We reported on the energetic and sustained campaign of Bing-plugging that ERNEST SUTKOWSKI was waging in America - to good effect, too. Occasionally, however, as we have found out, its not difficult to touch some characters on the raw! A newspaper article, a review of some Elvis Presley Compact Discs appeared in the usual eulogistic mode and among the comments was:

> "....as well as five songs not from the film (LOVING YOU). Cole Porter's 'True Love' (the big hit from the film HIGH SOCIETY) was probably the most unusual choice for Elvis."

In came our doughty Ernest as follows:

> "Dear Mr. Delanoy:
>
> With reference to your article in the July 1988 issue of Tower Records' PULSE, for gosh sakes would it have been out of place to state: 'True Love' (the big Bing Crosby hit) from the film HIGH SOCIETY?
>
> What is it with some of you folks? Do you really believe that we Americans wish to bury certain parts of our history as quickly as possible? Are you concerned that you may have your wrists slapped by the rock & roll crowd for "daring" to mention little, old Bing in the same column as big, addicted, Elvis?
>
> Are you now angry at me for referring to Elvis as addicted? Well, that's what he was and we have no choice but to sorrowfully accept that.
>
> However, my intention is not to denigrate Elvis Presley (let his soul find peace) but to remind you not to forget Bing Crosby, a major, if not THE major, influence in popular music in this country.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> ERNEST H. SUTKOWSKI.

Clearly, this touched the reviewer, Mr. Delanoy, on a tender spot for he replied quite promptly:

> Dear Mr. Sutkowski,
>
> Your letter dated July 5th, which was sent to the Editorial offices of PULSE! has just reached me today, and I would be remiss not to reply to it immediately.
>
> It was not my intention to minimize the importance of Bing Crosby in American popular music, or to ignore the fact that he created 'True Love' in the film HIGH SOCIETY.

(Cont...

"However, in the context, and with all due respect, it would have been awkward to mention his name in a review of recordings made by Elvis Presley. In fact, in all fairness, not only should I have mentioned Bing Crosby's name, but Grace Kelly's as well, since she duets with him on the track

Your diatribe, which seems to indicate that I consider Elvis Presley an icon to the detriment of other popular performers, including Bing Crosby, is also a bit unfair. In my monthly review of soundtrack and show recordings, I try to keep a balance between those that will appeal to a broad segment of the readers of PULSE! from rock 'n' roll fans to admirers of the finer art of popular singing, like yourself.

If you have felt that your idol was unjustly neglected, rest assured that the occasion will soon arise for an unbiased evaluation of some of Bing Crosby's recordings in one of my columns (I only hope that Elvis Presley's fans do not accuse me then of neglecting their favorite performer.)

Yours sincerely,

DIDIER DELAUNOY.

Hmmm...well, Ernest's letter was hardly a diatribe, was it - and you note that snide reference to Grace Kelly. The suggestion here, surely, was that why pick on Bing Crosby, didn't Grace Kelly make the number? A preposterous thought, but there it is. And the last paragraph is quite plaintive, really, and he seems to think that he may have to mention Bing as recording some of Presley's hit numbers in a tit-for-tat over 'True Love'.

Unabashed, and with great aplomb, our Ernest came back with:

Dear Mr. Delaunoy,

Thank you for your letter of July 16 in response to my correspondence regarding Bing Crosby and your Elvis Presley article.

Perhaps my message was a bit strong, but it did spark your interest. If nothing else then it reminded you of Bing. Oh, how quickly we Americans bury our happy history.

If I offended you personally, Mr. Delaunoy, you surely misinterpreted the meaning of my words. I am not a professional writer and perhaps anytime I put pen to paper it results in 'diatribute'. Touché !

Believe me, I do understand your reader requirements; no simple task to please all.

Yes, Grace Kelly did duet with Bing on 'True Love' (and mention of Miss Kelly would be fine too, as it would take very little space) as did hundreds of others on his 2300 plus recordings. As a matter of fact, there is another commercially released version of 'True Love' by Bing and Rosemary Clooney. It is a long story so I'll send you the compact disc set in which it appears - with my compliments, no strings

(Cont....

attached, from a Bing fan (not 'idolizer'.)

You may not be able to review it for PULSE, however, as I believe it is available only through Silver Eagle Record Company. Nevertheless, please feel free to make use of it as you wish. Certainly pleasant listening.

I sincerely look forward to your future evaluation of some of Bing's recordings. I have no doubt you will be objective. And thanks again for writing. It would have been easy to simply ignore me. I respect that.

Cordially,

ERNEST H. SUTKOWSKI.

Talk about disarming criticism! And Ernest added a PS - and a PPS:

"PS. Bing Crosby's name probably should be and often is included in articles about other singers/performers. A few years ago a writer said: 'It is difficult to imagine a James Taylor without a Bing Crosby.' I think Elvis Presley's fans would be pleased to have his name associated with the 'Father of my career' (as Frank Sinatra has referred to Bing).

PPS: A friend of mine in reviewing this letter suggested I ask: 'Which Elvis Presley songs subsequently were recorded by Bing Crosby? None, as far as I recall.

Doughty stuff - and positive too, in sending the gentleman the CD set! We have no copy of any subsequent correspondence. No doubt Mr. Delaunoy was rendered speechless!

Mr. Justice Francis Smith - who now prefers plain Frank! - came up with this:

"I am delighted to note that Bing has been on radio, TV and the print media more than usual during the past few weeks, and I'm hoping this apparent renewal of interest in him continues. Last week Frank Sinatra had a two-hour tribute to William B. Williams who for many years was the leading dic-jockey in the USA. One of the segments of the programme was an interview Williams once had with Bing, in which Bing had expressed great praise for his friends and fans in England. They then played the English Decca LP featuring ONCE IN A WHILE. We learned subsequently that many people called the station to say how much they had enjoyed the show. Unfortunately, I was driving to the beach and didn't have a tape-recorder handy. I will now start a search to find some who did manage to get it recorded.

The Arcadia LP with its RHYTHM BOYS airshot discovery and Larry Kiner's five new Spokane LPs have been mentioned frequently, and now 'Time Life' has indicated they will soon release one or two Crosby tracks on compact disc. This is certainly most welcome news and, hopefully, will encourage other companies to issue some more.

IN THE NEAR FUTURE IT IS PROPOSED TO ' ARRANGE A LUNCHEON MEETING FOR ERNIE SUTKOWSKI, FRED ROMARY, TOM WHITE, MYSELF AND OTHERS. THE PURPOSE OF THIS GATHERING WILL BE TO START AN EAST COAST BRANCH OF THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY. I WILL KEEP YOU POSTED OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS DIRECTION.

From all accounts, valiant KEN TWISS is not enjoying good health just now and is having some difficulty in keeping up the work of the Society which is one of the reasons why we are going to attempt to carry out some of his projects and to ensure the carrying out of the Society's purpose.

Editor: That is excellent news; we are indeed getting reports of the ill-health of Ken. This news from such great East Coast stalwarts will obviously be of good cheer to him.

PS. From Frank Smith - "we have had an exceptionally hot summer".....

SUMMER? WHAT'S THAT? HOT? BLIMEY !

ALL-THE-YEAR-ROUND-BING

An idea that has often exercised many minds and yet, somehow, has never managed to get to fruition has at last - andhappily - come to pass ! We're all ALL-THE-YEAR-ROUND-BING people, fittingly for the voice for all seasons, but this adds a new and highly welcome dimension.

In short, A 1989 CALENDAR - 12 MONTHS WITH BING ! is the title.

It has been produced by THE NEW BING CROSBY COLOUR PHOTO CLUB (address: 32, Ferndale Avenue, WALLSEND, Tyne & Wear, NE28 7NE (Frank Murphy)

It is a most spectacular, well-produced calendar, too, measuring overall 17½ inches by 12 inches. There is a "front cover" then the twelve months all adorned with a splendid black and white photograph of Bing (sometimes with co-stars) Thirteen really fine photographs in crystal-clear reproduction. The photographs inside the overall size, are 10 inches by 9½ inches - large pictures which will claim attention wherever displayed. They will also offer a cheering picture to dominate each month of the year.

THE COLOUR PHOTO CLUB is to be congratulated on its enterprise; and it is earnestly hoped the project will be well supported.

PRICES: UK: £3.75p OVERSEAS: £4.25p (surface), OVERSEAS: £4.75 (air)

DELIVERY, WE ARE INFORMED, IS IMMEDIATE. NO MENTION IS MADE OF POST AND PACKING SO WE TAKE IT THE PRICES GIVEN ARE INCLUSIVE.

THIS IS A QUALITY PRODUCTION, AND WE FULLY RECOMMEND IT AS A FINE PIECE OF CROSBYANA.

IF THE "X" APPEARS IN THE BOX ON PAGE 3, EARLY REMITTANCE OF YOUR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION IS OF ENORMOUS ASSISTANCE.

"BING'S GIRL LOVES OUR RAIN"

(heading to a story in an Irish ppper(Dublin))

The story refers not to Mary Frances, as you might well suppose, but to Bing's widow, Kathryn. More of that later, for now it gives us the opportunity to enlarge on our somewhat cryptic remarks regarding our summer on page 28, especially for American members.

> In short, we have experienced the most abominable summer within living memory, even for the oldest of us! Anyone who likes "our" rain is welcome to take a large share of it. It has rained - and rained. And the wind has blown; and it has been grey and dismal. One's heart has ached for all those kind-hearted (and brave) souls who have organised galas, carnivals, fetes and so on only to see them drowned and bedraggled.....it is small wonder that there is a large exodus to Spain, Italy, Greece and other more salubrious climes in ANY year. But this year - it was essential. The few sunny days we had served only to lure the populace into summer garb - and almost immediately drench them in chill winds. No wonder these islands are riddled with rheumatism in it various painful forms.
>
> On the other hand, it is easy to imagine that anyone from a near-desert habitat might find the gentle rain that falleth from Heaven, soft and alluring.....but like most things, it should be taken in moderation.

It appears that Mrs. Kathryn has been spending a holiday in the Emerald Isle, and the article reporting her presence began:

> "Its early in an August evening, the Mayo skies full of rain clouds just aching to be ripped open by the peak of Croagh Patrick. On the radio comes the mellow easylistnin' voice of Bing Crosby. He is suggesting that nothing could be finer than to be in Carolina in the morning.
>
> Five minutes later, sitting before a healthy turf fire in Ballinafad Agricultural College near Balla, the elegant lady who is Bing's widow....Kathy Crosby.....almost violently disagrees. Nothing, but nothing, says Kathy Crosby with a toss of her hair, could be finer than to be in the west of Ireland, in August, in the soft rain. Nothing could be finer than that.

"I came for three days and now I find almost with amazement, that we have stayed three weeks in this lovely place."....."I have already made plans to come back on April 1 next and I am going to stay for at least a month. The rain? The soft moist atmosphere is marvellous.

Kathy Crosby, accompanied by her friend, Doctor Bill Sullivan, sounds almost exactly like a voice-over for a hard-selling Irish holiday film. "Its a beautiful country. I love the peace, the beauty, the people. And the softness of the weather. Look, anyone who lives in a dry place in Nevada where it is so dry and warm you wouldn't believe and now with this drought for months and months.....I am in fear of going home. I don't know how I am going

to do it. You cannot know how good this moisture and the cool air feels to someone from the States."

> She talks about Bing and her years with him. He called her Kathy until they got married, then Kathryn. He brought her to Ireland once, about the mid-'Seventies, to make a TV special and what she remembered best from that trip in Waterford, was the thatched cottages. They were very lovely and wasn't it remarkable that the roofs lasted so long, up to thirty years.

Kathy Crosby says that they went out to pubs and met the people there, propping their cycles against the wall. Locally, even people who just saw the tip of her nose protruding from the raindrenched poncho would call out 'Hello Mrs. Crosby'!

Editor: The visit hasn't been publicised over here on the mainland. The article was accompanied by a photograph of Kathryn sitting on a farm-fence, before a large herd of cows. The caption read:

> ""DON'T FENCE ME IN".....the words of this old Bing Crosby hit seem to suit this picture of his wife Kathryn on her holiday at Ballinafod College, Balla, Co. Mayo."

Well, as we said, Kathryn's appreciation was probably understandable - but six months should cure the feeling !

MRS. RENEE CHESTER is now settled in her new abode at :

53 Park Crescent, Eastwood, Nottingham, NG16 3DS (Phone: 0773-761548)

and putting the "Spanish experience" behind her, with husband Dennis, and needless to say, happy as always to hear from her friends. There is, however, some rather disturbing news in that Renee who has in the past worked hard at getting Spokane records for people over here has now been subjected to a considerable hiccup. And this, surprisingly, means she will NOT now be getting the latest of the Larry Kiner albums. Its a most unfortunate development for all concerned, and a situation over which Renee has no control.

Harking back to our comments on the "summer" (a man across the way has just gone out in OILSKINS to pick some runner beans - do they have them in America? They are variously called string-beans, stick beans, scarlet runners &c?) - harking back, despite our griping and grumbling and well-justified grievance, it has to be said that we have not had to endure the droughts, floodings, famines and other natural disasters that have afflicted so many desperate people in this troubled world of late, thank Heaven. Perhaps we're not so badly off at that....

STOP PRESS NEWS IS THAT THE CBS CROSBY COLLECTION (REVISED) IS NOW ISSUED THOUGH NOT HERE. BUT WE LEARN THAT THIS RE-RELEASE CONTAINS MANY ALTERNATE TAKES - AND THE WHOLE THING IS DIGITALLY REMASTERED. SURELY THIS MEANS THAT IT WILL ALSO BE IN COMPACT DISC FORM? THIS MUST BE - WHEN IT EVENTUATES - THE GREATEST CROSBY PACKAGE TO DATE....

TRADING POST

This feature is intended as a boon - and hopefully - a blessing to members. Here you can advertise your wants and disposals in the way of Crosbyana - records, tapes, pictures, books &c. Entries are free tho' there is a nominal charge of £1 for non-Crosby items. Please keep items to a maximum of six (6) lines; if lengthy lists are involved, invite a SAE. Please make your requirements plain.

Please note that stocks of THE BING CROSBY LP-ography are now exhausted. The mini discography, together with the ABC of Bing Crosby (by Colin Pugh) - an analysis of the varying takes of Bing's recordings - remain. £1.50 each, post paid, for £2.50 the two, also post paid.

Perhaps surprisingly, except for the four RADIO YEARS LPs the records stated to be available - remain available. In other words they have not been snapped up.

GEORGE BAILIE, 5 Rowallane Close, Bangor, Co. Down, N. Ireland, BT19 2SS:

I am keen to get a copy of Bing's CALL ME LUCKY and would be grateful for any help.

WANTED: The LP "BING TAKES TO THE ROAD" from the World Records set THE VERY BEST OF BING (No. SM296) P. REEVES, Coxwalls Cottage, Henstridge, Templecombe, Somerset BA8 0PB (Tel: (0963) 63497

JOHN RAINE, 109 Sandown Crescent, Sandiway, Northwich, Ches. CW8 2QN (phone Sandiway 888549) would like to obtain any recordings by Monte Rey. Help appreciated - I do have the Conifer LP.

We mentioned the sterling equivalent to dollars at current rates in connection with the Arcadia album with the newly-discovered Rhythm Boys airshot; it is not recommended, however, that you remit sterling to the States. Dollar bills can be purchased at most banks, holiday bureaus, exchange bureaus &c. Or, of course, your bank may effect a dollar-cheque for you to despatch.

STAN WOODFORD, 6 Mariam Gardens, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 6QA offers back issues of BING, Nos. 41 (March '76) through to No. 86 all in fine condition. Sensibly would be best for all to go together: any reasonable offer plus postage acceptable. I also have a new updated list of Bing on VHS video, with a further reduction on price as blanks are down in cost again.

Bing/Rosie and Buddy Cole Trio air-shots without adverts Vole 3 now available on TDK 'D' at £3. inclusive of postage/packing or £9 for all three volumes: from BERT DAY 35 Galla Crescent, Dalbeattie, Scotland, DG5 4JY (Phone (0556 611215)

THE GOLDEN AGE OF ENTERTAINMENT is the project of STEVE THOMPSON, 13 Avignon, Milford Grange, Castletroy, Limerick, Ireland - a vast range of vintage American radio material including of course, scores of Crosby programmes. 270-page catalogue lists more than 900 cassettes covering most of the vintage radio stars, historic announcements (Pearl Harbour for instance) etc. etc. Catalogue, fascinating in itself, costs £6.

The BING novelty paperweight (photograph embedded in solid perspex has delighted a large number of members - a few remain of this unusual piece of Crosbyana - £5.00 inclusive, from ARTHUR BLOOD, 597 Osmaston Road, Derby, DE2 8NE.

MIKE SLIPMAN, 153 Francklyn Gardens, Edgware, Midd'x, HA8 8SB I am changing over to Compact Discs and therefore want to dispose of my stocks of Crosby LPs. There is a large collection open to offers; send SAE for lists.

Editor: Mike has supplied many Bing records in the past, and was principally associated with the Magic, Submarine and other labels.

STAGGERING NEWS FROM AMERICA

MENTION has been made about the reissue of A CROSBY COLLECTION BY CBS, and tho' the news did seem fairly definite it was not easy to believe that this tremendous set would indeed be reissued in modern format - that is, in digitalised remastering AND Compact Discs as well as LPs. Now the news is concrete! Not only have we seen the studio work-sheets but also photo-copies of the CD inlays. To be quite clear, we are talking about the three Volumes of A BING CROSBY COLLECTION issued a few years back by CBS.

BUT, THIS REISSUE IS CONSIDERABLY ENLARGENED AND TAKES IN MOST, IF NOT ALL, THE CROSBY RECORDINGS AVAILABLE TO CBS. THE THREE LPs ALREADY ISSUED CONTAINED AN AGGREGATE OF 42 titles: THE NEW RELEASE HAS no LESS THAN 65!

There are three CDs No. 1 has 20 tracks; No. 2 has 22 and No. 3 has 23

The tracks additional to the previous issue are:

1. My kinda love-
2. Little pal
3. Oh! Miss Hannah
4. Snuggled on your shoulder
5. Shine (with Mills Bros)
6. Face the Music Medley:
   Soft lights and sweet music
   Music on a roof in Manhattan
7. Paradise (non-Bing)
8. Lawd, you made the night too long (full version)
9. Some of these days
10. Linger a little long (in the twilight with me)
11. Brother can you spare a dime?
12. Sweet Sue
13. Let's put out the lights and go to sleep.
14. On the street of dreams.
15. I've got the world on a string
16. My honey's lovin' arms (with Mills Bros)
17. Someone stole Gabriel's horn
18. Stay on the right side of the road
19. Learn to croon.
20. Blue prelude.
21. There's a cabin in the pines
22. The last round-up
23. May I?

What a truly wonderful bonanaz - at least, for those devoted to Bing of the early '30's. We can hardly wait! Perhaps by the time this is with you the LPs and the CDs will be with us. BLUE PRELUDE on CD! Not to mention the other legendary tracks like BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A DIME, MAY I? LINGER A LITTLE LONGER and so on. And as we've already said, many have different 'takes' from those on the previous issue. The sleeves state: BING CROSBY: THE CROONER: THE COLUMBIA YEARS 1928-1934.... This has to be one of the finest Crosby packages ever.

We deal with this more fully in the next issue when surely the records/discs will be in our hands.

RADIO listeners to Radio 4 may have caught a most interesting item on April 4 last in the "IN TOUCH" programme, broadcast at 9.15 pm. This is a programme especially for blind people though, of course, not only such afflicted people listen to it. On this date, our member SYLVIA CROLLIN of 127 Glastonbury Rd., Morden, Surrey, and her friends Margaret and Dale were featured, mainly on

account of their Crosby interests.

Seems they wrote away for further details of a computer; a salesman came to their home to explain and demonstrate its capabilities. He could hardly avoid noticing the Crosby memorabilia around - a bust of Bing, albums, photographs &c. He was immensely interested and told the trio someone from the BBC would come along and chat to them.

The result was the interview on the programme mentioned. The trio described the uses to which they could put the computer and Dale detailed how it would be useful in their collection of Bing records. Title of the album, label and number, with titles of songs were entered into the memory of the computer. Thus, hearing of a new album they could check immediately on whether they had it, or what songs on it they already had. It all made an interesting feature.

CONTEMPORARY CROSBYANA

THE two pages following demonstrate, as is fitting, how Bing, more than ten years after his death, continues to crop up in the media as a household name, in the normal course of events, as it were.

The story about Bing's sole possession when he died on that golf-course is new, interesting, perhaps illuminating - and certainly feasible.

There is another of that legion of Scottish golf-course stories. Bing's frequent visits to the Scottish courses, which he loved, have left untold memories for so many people North of the Border.

The snippet about the 12-year-olds asking if Bing had made any more singles is quite delightful and sure to raise a smile. Bus is it true? Or a figment of some journalists inventive imagination? Remember, we've already read that Bing started his career as part of a mind-reading act! We tend to think that even 12-year-olds, 10 years after Bing's death also, would know something of Bing....still it may be true.

We can guarantee that the headline - KILLER TYSON - is just about the last any reader expected to see in BING! But the story unfolds, and a remarkable story it proves to be. Tyson is a soft-spoken man who has the power to terrify us even at a distance of several thousand miles when we see him in the boxing ring! His sheer ferocity is quite unnerving. Our Frank Bruno, who is "a good strong boy" is due to meet Tyson and whether or not he's a good boxer, he is certainly a brave man - or he has a death-wish! But this ferocious puncher is booked on "crackly" Crosby 78s - and the Road films! Perhaps Frank Bruno should take a few rare Bing's as a placatory gesture - BEFORE the fight!

The final item is not Contemporary for as you can see, it is dated March 1935 and comes from the British musical trade paper, THE MELODY MAKER. St. Georges Hall was the venue the BBC used for variety-show broadcasts in the 'Thirties. Jimmy Messini was a dance-band singer of the same dedade.

(Cont. page 36

The secret Bing kept

LAS BRISAS Golf Club near Marbella in Spain boasts one of the most difficult and attractive courses on the Costa.

It is played regularly by professional golfers and showbiz personalities, as well, of course, as by the members who pay a great deal of money per annum for the privilege.

And it was at Las Brisas that Bing Crosby died.

The Great Man had just played a round in the blazing sunshine — scoring a highly creditable (to some of us, brilliant) round of 77.

He went into the locker room to change before going upstairs for a post-round drink, bent down to untie his golf shoes and keeled over.

He died shortly afterwards.

At Las Brisas these days they're fond of telling you that Bing carried with him only one personal possession that day (apart from the clothes he was wearing that is).

What do you think it was? Credit cards? Money? Address book? Photos.?

No. All they found in his pocket was a string of Rosary Beads.

Interesting, isn't it?

THURSDAY

BING CROSBY died ten years ago.

I dare say we all have our own memories of him, but my own was given to me by a colleague who covered a golf tournament at Turnberry in 1976.

Bing was playing and, as he walked between shots, he was constantly asked for his autograph. He happily signed every one. Then he spotted a young woman who was shyly hanging back.

"Hullo, there!" he called. "Don't you want my autograph, then?" The young woman, from Kirkcaldy, answered, "Certainly, Mr Crosby . . . but I'd rather hear you sing."

"That's no problem," Bing told her. He walked forward and linked arms with her. Together they strolled down the 17th fairway with Bing singing an old favourite from his early days.

Every time it rains, it rains pennies from heaven.

Don't you know each cloud contains pennies from heaven?

Bing's gesture, so typical of the man, gave that Fife lass the thrill and memory of a lifetime. And I know this week, she's been re-living every moment.

SUNDAY BRUNCH . SUNDAY BRUNCH .

● TWO lads of about 12 went into a music shop this week and asked the owner for the record of the music that accompanies The Singing Detective series now being repeated on telly.

● "That's Don't Fence Me In, boys," he told them "and it's sung by Bing Crosby."

● "We think it's great," said one of the lads. "Has he made any other singles?"

SUNDAY BRUNCH . SUNDAY

KILLER TYSON

HE breeds doves and pigeons, keeps two parrots, and even a pet goldfish called, believe it or not, Porky.

He's a nostalgia freak. His turntable spins more crackly Bing Crosby than cool Run DMC.

He has videos of every film Fred Astaire ever made and spends hours pouring over old Hollywood musicals, feet up in his slippers.

He grows his own herbs and tomatoes. Plants his own shrubs and trees, and often helps the missus with the cooking.

He perks up the residents at his local old folks home by popping in with baskets of fruit.

"I'd rather be in the country with the wife and my pet birds"

He sounds so tame and laid-back he could be plodding peacefully through life's twilight zone himself.

Instead he's a tender 22-year-old. And this is no Mr Soft, but Iron Mike Tyson.

Boxing's most fearsome killing machine. Known as The Monster, even to his mates.

FROM villain to Mr Nice Guy. That's Mike Tyson's amazing transformation.

In under four years the kid with convictions for street thuggery has sorted himself out and turned his natural aggression into a £20 million fortune.

Probation experts fuelled Tyson's boxing career by telling him to take his tension out on opponents and advised: "Wind down completely when away from the ring." The advice has paid off handsomely. Now Tyson, when not in training, follows his favourite hobby pursuits. And he reckons: "I'm a changed man — and all the better for it."

Craving

The boxer blew £30,000 on a built-in theatre at his home so he could satisfy his craving for black and white Tinseltown classics.

He loves Astaire — "I'll never be able to move as fast as that guy" — and laps up the legendary Hope and Crosby Road films.

Music fan Mike likes punchy disco and rap but, astonishingly, late crooner Bing is among his top of the pops.

Mike's mum, Lorna, left him a pile of old 78rpm discs featuring the singer's finest work. Admits Mike: "I've been hooked ever since."

I WAS standing in the wings at the St. George's Hall during the "Transatlantic" broadcast recently, closely watching Ken Harvey, the gentlemen who dextrously performs Gershwin's *Rhapsody In Blue* on the banjo for no good reason that I can see, when I heard some of the most life-like Crosby I have heard for many a long time.

For a moment I thought it was the great Bing paying his long-promised visit to England at last, but then I saw it was my old friend, the Masked Singer, *alias* Jimmy Messini.

He was doing his stuff all incognito with the girls, and for the legion of Crosby imitators which exists over here let me say that this transcended anything I have heard. But Jimmy can do much more than imitate, for he is a first-class performer in his own right, singing in several languages and playing much more than tonic and dominant on the guitar.

. . . masked singer and his 7s. 6d. guitar

to me

MAR 87 35.

The writer is a little fanciful for we know Jimmy quite well via records and no one could possibly mistake him for Bing. True, he keenly and enthusiastically adopted the Crosby style of phrasing, broken notes, boos &c but who didn't in those days? Hardly a popular singer of those times (and quite a few since) did the same thing, professional, semi-pro, amateurs in the Bing Crosby Competitions - and Tom, Dick and Henry in the bath!

> As a matter of interest, in 1939 Jimmy Messini teamed up with the well-remembered and liked AL BOWLLY to form a music-hall singing duo. It was cut short, however, by the tragedy of Bowlly's death in a landmine explosion in May 1941.

But what is of interest in the story is the reference to the legion of Crosby imitators, and especially, the writer believing that Bing was making "his long-promised visit to England at last." This, in 1935! It was, of course, to be nine long years - and World War II - before Bing finally got to Britain. But the rumours came thick and fast in those days that Bing was coming....such was the desire to see this remarkable man who had so changed the concept of popular singing, with his appeal not to a narrow section of the populace, but seemingly to everyone.

As a footnote we might add that it would be difficult for Jimmy Messini to sound too much like Mr. C. He was a classically-trained tenor but clearly found dance-band work more remunerative than opera. And he could sing - and speak - several languages derived from his university education. Quite a chap, Jimmy Messini.

BING CROSBY was a superstar before that term was coined. He reached the pinnacle in radio, television, movies and just about every other area of show business.

> Yet he was a truly modest man. Only a humble man could say, as he did in his autobiography, CALL ME LUCKY:
>
> 'Every man who sees one of my movies, or listens to my records, firmly believes he can sing as well as I do, especially in the shower. He believes this because I have none of the mannerisms of a trained singer. If I've achieved any success as a warbler, its because I've managed to retain a kind of naturalness in my style, my phrasing and my mannerisms....'
>
> BOB HOPE

Thus Bob in the programme REMEMBERING BING; the full article will be reproduced in the next issue of BING, for Bob pays wholesome tribute to his great friend. Incidentally, there is no news at all that the TV show is going to be screened here by either BBC or IYV.

We learn that in addition to the REMEMBERING BING TV programme, PERRY COMO recently made a similar programme in which he recalled the life and music of Crosby. This lasted for an hour and 10 minutes. The show was entitled:

A TRIBUTE TO BING CROSBY BY PERRY COMO

About records....
through the years....

DISC Crosby

LETTERS form a large - and vital - part of our Crosbyana. Always welcome, sometimes informative, usually interesting, occasionally provocative - and very, very rarely, STARTLING! But such an occasion followed the last issue of BING. We were commenting on the fact that Bing after his great, initial impact and obviously under the influence of Jack Kapp, began to widen his repertoire. In addition to hit songs of the day, and his film songs, Mr. C. was recording songs like DEAR OLD GIRL, OLD FOLKS and POOR OLD ROVER. Probably the first departures were I LOVE YOU TRULY and, quite surprisingly, JUST A'WEARYING FOR YOU.

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Much mail ensued, mostly commenting on Bing's great versatility in the way of singing - but one letter came in the STARTLING! category. This member, who need remain nameless, said he certainly remembered the records of DEAR OLD GIRL, OLD FOLKS &c. - AND HIS EMBARRASSMENT AT THEM ! Well at least, I found this view startling, and frankly utterly fail to understand it. Why embarrassment? Good songs, well sung. In fact, one could say they harked back to the Victorian age when ballads had real lyrics, told a real story. Sometimes graphic, often humourous - and sometimes lachrymose!

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I could wish that my correspondent had enlarged somewhat - as to why such records caused embarrassment for frankly, I just cannot understand it. Perhaps he had wished Bing stuck to popular songs - but the departure causing embarrassment? Surely not.

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Its already been stated somewhere in this issue that Alan Cohen was by far the best musical director Bing worked with in the ' Seventies - the "local lad" with British Decca. The one we would unhesitatingly nominate as the most unsatisfactory would be one PAUL SMITH who was the MD on A SOUTHERN MEMOIR and BINGO VIEJO - surprisingly, these were the albums Bing himself originated and financed because he wanted to.... its difficult to believe that Bing found PAUL SMITH suitable for the musical direction.

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In fact, one is tempted to say COME BACK, BUDDY BREGMAN, all is forgiven! And that was, hitherto, unthinkable. But Paul Smith's ideas on arranging defy explanation. If you

haven't listened to the album lately, nerve yourself and chance it! In particular, I would nominate that normally lovely song, GEORGIA ON MY MIND, as the most monumental work of musical mayhem ever perpetrated.

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Normally, it is a song - by Hoagy Carmichael of course - of wistful longing to return to that southern state of America. But my goodness, what Paul Smith made of it is almost indescribable. Apart from the fact that the musical (?) accompaniment virtually drowns Bing out at times, the rhythm, such as it is, followw no known form - probably a mixture of all of them slightly resembling that moronic musical departure of some years back called Be-Bop....

****

What a relief to play Bing's version of GEORGIA ON MY MIND with Buddy Cole, circa. 1954, which can be heard on either NEW TRICKS Brunswick, or its recent re-release by Memoir. This is much more appropriate to the mood of the song Hoagy wrote. Of course, the Paul Smith recordings come under the heading of "modern treatment". Well, for my money, being modern doesn't mean you totally ignore, or overlook, the type of song, its make-up and what the composer clearly intended. It doesn't mean turning a sentimental, yearning sort of song into a frantic, frenetic, up-tempo nonsense.

****

On the sleeve of A SOUTHERN MEMOIR thereis an interview between Geoff. Milne of Decca and Bing in the course of which Bing remarks that he believes Paul has some rhythms going which are quite unique. Well, I don't know whether Bing's heart was in what he did on these albums but the rhythms are unique all right. In these notes, and from another source, reference is made to what they considered a humorous sequence in regard to WHERE THE MORNING GLORIES GROW whereby "the band sends up Guy Lombardo..."

****

Pity there wasn't a bit more of this 'humour' on the album for, to these ears, this accompaniment to MORNING GLORIES was the only musical itemon the album! And lest anyone also thinks it was humourous, and that it must be utterly old-fashioned, it might be pointed out that Guy Lombardo had a highly successful, and musical high society band long, long after all the rhythm bands, the swing bands, and the blues bands had disappeared!

****

BINGO VIEJO is somewhat more acceptable than A SOUTHERN MEMOIR, possibly because Paul Smith either didn't have the heart, or was unable, to wreak his modernisms on these lovely Latin-American songs. True, Paul got off the leash somewhat with AMAPOLA but then again, the guitar accompaniment to LA BORRACHITA is good, the real thing and totally sympathetic to the song. ERES TU is a rather melancholy but nevertheless quite attractive song. Bing had an affinity with these songs for he often seemed to express affection for Mexico and indeed, actually had a home there.

****

It is understood too that Bing was quite fluent in Spanish (the language, of course, most prevalent in Latin America) and thus he could sing lyrics in that language without relying on phonetic tuition as with some other tongues,

****

Perhaps Bing felt he was, after all those years, being left behind in the 'modern' sense; hence his shots with Paul Smith. However, more than enough griping, no doubt, for one issue! But our thoughts on Smith's work were prompted by hearing again (on Compact Disc) the excellent Cohen arrangements - and execution. The LP was first-class quality, but as is always the case, CD enhances even that considerably.

****

As the inlay notes say, wasn't THERE'S NOTHING THAT I HAVEN'T SUNG ABOUT a cleverly-constructed song? A potted musical biography of Bing forsooth! I wonder if anyone has ever taken the trouble to count and record the number of song titles mentioned, or implied? Those notes by John Tracy (we've already mentioned they are obscure and difficult to understand!) state that this song was "issued as a taster for Big Brother in the UK as Decca 45 F 13737 on October 28th..." Anyone have a clue as to what THAT means?

****

The writers of the clever lyrics were Duddy and Bresler of whom we've never heard and of whom we know absolutely nothing. Certainly the former was no Fuddy-Duddy!

****

Allowing for Alan Cohen, some of these latter-day musical directors for Bing (as we might term them) certainly illustrate for this writer at least what a treasure John Scott Trotter was - and only just behind JST, Victor Young? With nearly 600 records between them, the former well in the lead, they at least never forgot that they were accompanying a singer, and that singer was the prime performer, not them. Some have found it necessary to mildly criticise JST for being predictable and lacking in musical adventure. And also for a degree of "sameness" in his arrangements.

****

With over 300 recordings to his credit backing Bing, not to mention probably hundreds of radio performances of songs never recorded, that might be understandable, and pardonable. But to repeat ourselves, his work was always complementary to Bing's efforts; he was always an able and musical director, never a contestant for any honours arising!

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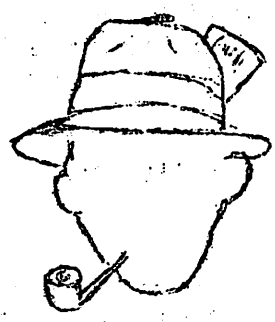
We might add a footnote; Ken Barnes writing in THE CROSBY YEARS, said: "The combination of Crosby-Smith is sheer magic."

****

That perhaps illustrates the vast difference in taste between a 30s man - and a 50s or later !

****

SOUTH RAMPART STREET PARADE and THAT'S A'PLENTY are rightly considered two classics of jazz. That's how they were conceived and indeed composed. Splendid numbers, too. It came as an astonishing surprise, and delight, when Bing actually sang lyrics to these two compositions. Vocal gymnastics might be a fair description of how the lyrics were enunciated! And, of course, he was most ably assisted by the Andrews Sisters in the former, and the remarkable Connee Boswell



with THAT'S A'PLENTY. I well recall the delighted astonishment with which I first heard these performances.

****

Vocalising to such jazz compositions demands near-virtuosity and certainly calls in all the prime facets of good singers—pitch, diction, phrasing, and above all, tremendous verve, all clearly apparent in these two recordings. Certainly no other singers appear to have sung lyrics to these pieces. Bing did much the same with Louis in MUSKRAT RAMBLE though that proceeds at a considerably more leizurely pace. But then, much earlier Bing had turned that great vaudeville number, GALLAGHER & SHEAN, into a jazz performance with the able assistance of Johnny Mercer.

****

Its quite remarkable how SOUTH RAMPART STREET PARADE captures the mood of the old New Orleans marching bands. One would almost think it was composed in the 20s if not a good deal earlier but, in fact, it was composed in 1940. And thereby, as they say, hangs a tale for it provides a family connection. It was composed by Ray Bauduc, Bob Haggart - and brother Bob Crosby. The first two are well remembered for, among other things, the eccentric number, BIG NOISE FROM WINNETKA.

****

With its authentic jazz construction it isn't surprising that it quickly became a 'standard' for traditional jazz (or Dixieland) bands - as it remains to this day. Splendid number - as is THAT'S A'PLENTY. We cannot trace who added the lyrics to either number but they did a good job in enabling us to hear Bing and his colleagues tackle them.

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Many of the above comments would apply to AT THE MAZZ BAND BALL (I'm sure many would point out !)

****

THERE'S NOTHING THAT I HAVEN'T SUNG ABOUT is certainly true; yet though we are inclined to think Bing sang not only his great film songs but also all the block-buster 'hits of the day'. Not so, however! Consider what a splendid album the following would have made, all songs Bing never put on commercial record and in most cases never even sang them on the radio. And all from the 'Thirties, too - some even earlier:

1. Love letters in the sand
2. Jealousy.
3. Love's last word is spoken.
4. One morning in May.
5. I get a kick out of you
6. I'll string along with you.
7. Smoke gets in your eyes.

1. I'm in the mood for love
2. Alone (from A NIGHT AT THE OPERA by Freed and Nacio Herb Brown)
3. So tired
4. Serenade in the night.
5. When the poppies bloom again
6. The Penny Serenade
7. I get along without you very well

Surprising, isn't it? Oh, SO TIRED was 1948 ! Seems earlier.

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And indeed, there are other big hits Bing never sang. In many cases it may be that he didn't record them because other artists on Brunswick (or Decca) had done so because they were particularly associated with them - or perhaps because the song was already well recorded anyway.

"ONLY A POPULAR SINGER?"

BY JOHN BIGNELL (Wembley) *********

Reading a book called TALKING JAZZ by Max Jones - a prolific interviewer of jazz people for well over 40 years - I found this when Jones was interviewing Rudy Braff, a cornettist who flowered in the '50s and was an outspoken advocate of real swinging music with no time at all for the modern stuff. This is Rudy Braff in 1976 talking about the then current scene:

'There were two things I enjoyed very much in recent years - the gig at Fairfield Hall (a tribute to Louis Armstrong) that was very pleasant, nice and cool - and the Palladium when I went to see BING. It was such a thrill. A friend got me tickets somehow and I sat in a box right over the stage, a few feet away from Bing. It was a wild thing. I'd never seen Crosby in person before. Naturally, he's a great performer, and then he's so casual. He looks wonderful out there carrying on. You know Bing has wonderful timing, the most incredible timing in the world - and he has everything else. He 'plays' better than all the horn players that you think are the greatest. They're not one eighth as good as him. He's good at everything.'

MAX JONES says: 'Rudy's enthusiasm seemed boundless and it was interesting to hear him on this subject. So many people feel that Crosby is a good popular singer and not much more and I started to say this.

'Let's not get into a hassle about what people think of him'. Braff sounded impatient. 'He's one of the greatest musicians in the world. THAT'S what makes him better than anyone else. Also he was born - luckily - with a tremendous voice - an instrument. You're born with those beautiful pipes or you're not. The rest can be learned, and of course he has the great gift of music as well. He has unusual artistry. There is that casualness that he invented - that's him. Its so marvellous to sit and look at this relaxed guy doing all these things. I couldn't believe it.'

Editor: RUDY BRAFF sounds quite a fan! Interesting - but he was only coming lately - very lately! - coming to realise what had been accepted by many since almost the start of Bing's career.

Certainly people like Beiderbecke, Venuti, Lang, Trumbauer, Teagarden - and Artie Shaw, not to mention the Dorseys - recognised these qualities in Bing. This may have been two-edged for it is possible that Bing learned from THEM! But its a more acceptable theory that Bing had these inate qualities.

Remember Artie Shaw in Barry Norman's HOLLYWOOD GREATS programme on BBC-TV said that generslly bands didn't like singers - but Bing was different. He knew how musicians thought and felt - and sang like a musician.

Mind, the same thing has been said about other singers but for me, at least, it has never been remotely credible - or acceptable.

"BINGANG"

GOES EUROPEAN ! !

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Subscriptions to the leading US Crosby magazine are available in the UK.

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KEN CROSSLAND,
9 Arden Drive,
Dorridge,
SOLIHULL,
WEST MIDLANDS, B93 8LP

KEN DIDN'T SAY SO, BUT I'M SURE HE WOULD APPRECIATE A SAE.

hadn't."

PLEASE READ

Disaster survivors met Bing

THREE Freckleton youngsters who survived the village's worst tragedy are being sought by fans of the late US crooner, Bing Crosby.

George Carey, Ruby May Whittle and David Madden were the only three in their class of nursery toddlers to survive the wartime disaster when an American bomber heading for nearby Warton on August 23, 1944, crashed on the village killing 61 people.

American servicemen and local civilians rescued five youngsters from the nursery school but the three were the only ones to survive after being taken to the nearby US-base hospital.

A memorial service to mark the 44th anniversary of the tragedy will be held at Holy Trinity Church, Freckleton on Tuesday August 23 at 7.30pm.

Now British fans of Bing Crosby are appealing to the three to come forward after revelations that the old groaner's first trip to Britain included a visit to Warton see the injured youngsters.

Details of the historic visit are included in "Bing", the quarterly magazine for members of the star's International Circle fan club.

Said 63-year-old David Malkin of Norbreck Road, Bispham, "The author of the article on Bing's visit asked if anyone knew the whereabouts of these children who by now are obviously in their 50's.

"I am probably the only person in the area who would have received the magazine and I was very interested to hear this request."

The magazine article recalls, "Ruby said he sat on her bed and held the tips of her fingers that were sticking out of the bandages."

The star, who according to the story could not sing a note at first "because the sight of the three tots proved too much for him" eventually stood in the hospital doorway and sang "White Christmas" and "Don't Fence Me In."

"I have followed Bing since 1940 and I have more than 250 of his albums. This visit to Britain was his first despite having been a world star for 14 years and it would be nice for someone to come forward who may have met him after the terrible tragedy," said Mr Malkin.

Editor of the magazine, Mr Reg Bristo, can be reached at 7, Green Meadow Close, Cwmbran, Gwent.

STATUE OF BING AT GONZAGA UNIVERSITY.

Bing Crosby sang real tunes

- AND THAT'S FOR CERTAIN !

Our story in the last issue about the shocking War-time disaster in the Lancashire village of Frecklington created considerable interest. This was especially so when our member involved us with a local newspaper, as you can see. Other members had personal recollections. Not surprisingly the tragedy remains vivid there with frequent memorial services. American servicemen stationed there at the time also remain closely attached to Frecklington.

Actually, the paper misinterpreted our story for tho' we found ourselves wondering if any present member knew of the survivors, we had a degree of reticence about actually finding the ladies concerned. It does seem, however, that Ruby Whittle, under her married name, is living in Sandown, on the Isle of Wight. This was a considerable surprise to Les Gaylor, who is looking up the lady and will almost certainly report any memories.

LETTERS

EDW. STURRUP, 20 Willow Avenue, Hyannis, Mass. 02601, USA:

I enjoyed reading the article on Mike Holiday. I think I have mentioned to you in the past, I organise many motor-coach tours mainly for senior citizens, and when we leave Cape Cod I always play Mike Holiday singing OLD CAPE COD amd tell them they will get a prize if they know the singer. About 40 hands always shoot up and there's a unanimous cry of BING CROSBY!

Editor: Goes to show: you can fool some of the people SOME of the time....but why not Bing's record of that song ? Spoile the joke...

MIKE O'DONOGHUE, 2 Worcester Gardens, Cranbrook, Ilford, Essex, IG1 3NW: I felt I cuouldn't let two results from last Saturday's racing pass unnoticed without a fanfare for the memory of the person concerned.

LINGFIELD: 2.00 Result Winner CROSBY at 12-1
CHESTER: 3.20 " " DOCTOR RHYTHM evens

I wonder how many (Crosby) punters backed this coincidental double?

Have just heard that CROSBY has won again - at Warwick this time. Well, Bing was always in a different class to all his rivals, wasn't he!

Editor: Well, your Editor for one did NOT back 'em... granted life's a gamble, I realised about 100 years ago that the chaps with the thick gold rings and chains across their middle were the bookmakers! No paragon of virtue me, but I felt the place to be was in the bookies seat! With apologies - or is it congratulations - to our bookmaker members!

REG BRISTO,
7, GREENMEADOW CLOSE,
CWMBRAN,
GWENT, NP44 4PJ

More seriously, quite a number of our members DID spot the Bing connections and came up trumps. And many recalled the time when Bing seemed to be turning up on radio and TV here in all kinds of programmes in the 70s. And especially the one when he appeared in GRANDSTAND with Frank Bough. During the programme Bing learned that a horse called UNCLE BING was a runner and borrowed a fiver off Bough to back it! Uncle Bing won, too. Bing was, of course, in his element in that programme talking about horse-flesh. He always had a passion for the sport - one has only to think back to Del Mar.

JOE FORSTER, 33, Brieryfield Rd., Maudland, Preston, Lancs, PR1 8SR:

The Bing angle relating to the Freckleton disaster is most interesting to me, especially as I live so near the village. I didn't live here at the time of the crash but the many heroic stories are still recounted here, and written about. The childrens' graves in the local cemetery have been beautifully tended all through the years. In fact, for many years by an ex-American airman who settled in the area after the War and quietly assumed the task as, it is said, an act of reparation. It was some time before this was discovered - another American with a heart like Bing. Strangely, no one seems to know of Bing's visit.

Editor: As we said, this was typical of many letters received - and a lot more from kindly people who read of the story in their local paper and are not BING-members. Seems 63 people were killed in this awful accident, 48 of them children.

Latest news is that the lady who, as a little girl, was comforted by Bing is now:

Mrs. Ruby May Currell,
25 Ranelagh Road,
Lake,
Sandown,
ISLE OF WIGHT PO36 8NX

TONY PEVERETT, 7 Burgh Mount, Banstead, Surrey, SM7 1ER:

In the last issue was asked the question: Was Bing a "dog" man? Anyone who has read Kathryn Crosby's book MY LIFE WITH BING will know of a letter she wrote wherein she refers to Remus, their dog, destroying their breakfast room garden, and also how good he was with Harry Jnr. In the same letter she refers to "fat old Cindy" and her years of devoted service. I think this must be "Cindy" of Cindy Lou in GONE FISHIN' as she would have been a young dog then.

Incidentally, I found this book quite superb; it gives a real insight as to what Bing was really like though you may have to read between the lines in some cases. And, for a change, how nice to read a book about Bing that hardly mentions his film, radio, or record career!

Editor: Which only goes to show how opinions can vary! I want to read NO book about Bing that doesn't deal precisely with the things Tony found it nice NOT to read about! Bing's private life, especially with Kathryn, holds no interest for me. But, thats being opionated!!

TREVOR SMITH, 29 Elm Tree Rd., Locking, Weston-super-Mare, BS24 8DP:

Your article on steel needles and heavy sound boxes was interesting - and so true. I well remember them. However, I was surprised you did not mention the fibre needles! I used these for some time - had a little tool to re-sharpen the point. Seemed less cruel to the old 78 records than the steel needles. I had at that time (in fact, I still do) a HMV wooden table model gramophone. When the electric pick-ups first appeared I had one and "converted" but kept the original tone arm and soundbox. I still have a lot of 78s in excellent condition.

Editor: Well, we didn't intend our little piece to be comprehensive; in any case, we never did get to see the fibre needles! They certainly would wreak less havoc than the monstrous steel ones. Young members reading these memories must have a smile or two. And there's more. For example, one 'controlled' the volume by opening or shutting the front 'doors'. One could also get "loud", "soft" and "medium" tone needles. Never could understand

how they worked. There didn't seem to be any logical reason except, possibly, the diameter of the point? One is bound to point out, however, that technological advances from the "sound-box" days were truly remarkable - and rapid. Electric pick-ups, moving-coil speakers, auto-change turntables, smoother and smoother sound....and chiefly, the STYLUS and an end to the sabotaging steel needles! But my goodness - like so many other advances this century - it all came so speedily.

JOHN BIGNELL, 21 St. Andrews Avenue, Wembley, Midd'x, HA0 2QB:

I caught a brief glimpse of Bing on Channel 4 the other day. A programme called TIMES REMEMBERED (3.30pm Fridays) showed wartime scenes and then there was Bing at the microphone in the Services Club doing a "double-act" with our own Jack Buchanan. Jack, immaculate as ever in evening dress, and Bing casual as ever in sports jacket and loud tie. Must say I've never been a fan of the debonair type as typified by Buchanan - no doubt the appeal is to the ladies! What amused me, however, was the fact that poor Jack was obviously very, very nervous performing with Bing. He clutched his script with both hands as if his life depended upon it, and scarcely dared raise his eyes from the printed word. Bing, on the contrary, waved his script all over the place, glanced at it a few times and did his usual self-mocking act about his casual clothes.

Editor: Jack was debonair all right but he wouldn't have been the first to be un-nerved appearing with Bing.

SHELDON O'CONNELL, 1675 Hornby St.,, No. 201, South Tower Seawalk, Vancouver, B.C. Canada, V5Z 2M3:

Like you, I've always been puzzled at Sinatra's opinion that he distanced himself from crooners because he was a bel canto singer. It puzzles me because at one time I studied classical singing in the early 50s and Bel Canto was part of it and it required tremendous discipline and vocal technique quite foreign to Sinatra's styling.

Editor: Yes, Sheldon who did VOICE FOR ALL SEASONS and the DICK TODD book; bel canto is the grand Italian style of operatic/concert singing. So Sinatra's description remains mysterious.

From mail received, Some American members may like to know that the 10th Anniversary Set (Ken Barnes set) can be obtained in their country from:

SILVER EAGLE RECORDS INC.,
DEPT. RS-6603
535 Fifth Avenue
New York,
NY 10017

RON BOSLEY, 458 Kings Causeway, Brierfield, Nr. Nelson, Lancs, BB9 0TU

would like his many friends in Crosbyana to know his new address. Included in this notice was a heart-warming note which read: "I lost my dear wife 2½ years ago. On July 23 I am getting married again - to Vera. She's a lovely lady, very much like my late wife in so many ways...."

Our good wishes to Ron and Vera...

EASY TO REMEMBER THE WAY WE WERE

GENERALISATIONS are invariably ill-advised. They are seldom completely true. I was reminded of this the other day when I heard someone remark "They don't write songs like that any more..." We were listening to some vintage dance music - and some Bing, at the time. I must confess, also, that it is a view I have often expressed.

Not true, however. Good songs are being written today - and have been in recent years. The trouble is that they do not get the "Top Ten" treatment and thus do not, or seldom do, become best-sellers. They do not reach the top of the Hit Parade as it used to be known. Now, as we all know, the one-line-lyric'songs' are performed by bizarre groups, with characters in vests and braces with two-tier, two-tone hair 'do's' cavorting around - invariably miming with their clumsily-held guitars to someone who CAN play the stringed instrument. Alas, they are the ones who become overnight millionaires. Its a funny old world, as others are wont to aver.

But we were reminded of the "they don't write songs like that" syndrome when it so happened that we listened to Bing singing that beautiful song of 1935, ITS EASY TO REMEMBER (BUT SO HARD TO FORGET); and immediately afterwards found ourselves listening to Bing singing the 1976 THE WAY WE WERE - an equally lovely song, most will agree.

> And suddenly, it was quite inescapable, we realised how similar are th e two songs! Differently constructed, of course, with entirely different melodies and indeed, different lyrics. Yet, the 'modern' THE WAY WE WERE perfectly paraphrases the feelings and sentiments of ITS EASY TO REMEMBER! If you doubt this go through the words of the two songs.

THE WAY WE WERE was composed by Marvin Hamlisch, with words by Marilyn and Alan Bergman for the Barbra Streisand film with Robert Redford; Bing's 40 years earlier ITS EASY TO REMEMBER came, of course, from the famed team of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart and was sung by Bing in his film MISSISSIPPI. Two teams years apart yet both expressing the same sentiments in vastly differing ways yet, strangely, in remarkably poignant fashion.

> Bing made a tremendous job of both songs; and this is particularly apparent now that THE WAY WE WERE is on Compact Disc. The sheer feeling and - intimacy is perhaps the best word - comes through overwhelmingly.
>
> And Bing's voicing of these two songs were virtually 40 years apart. What further testimony to Mr. Crosby's remarkable career.

Yes indeed, good songs are written today - look at SEND IN THE CLOWNS - but the scene is so vastly different, as hinted above re. pop groups. For a start, there are not the tuneful dance bands of yesteryear which used to play so attractively their own versions of the "songs of the day" regularly on the radio. And the way, to use the old cliche, that "messenger boys" used to whistle the song as a criterion for its 'hit' potentiality !

Ah me, those were indeed the days.....

Now, its to think about the Christmas issue..... December isn't that far away!

19 March 1942 Guests: Allen Jenkins
Nigel Bruce
Lester V. Barrie

DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS (with Music Maids)
SOMEBODY ELSE IS TAKING MY PLACE
DID YOUR MOTHER COME FROM IRELAND?
ROSE O'DAY (with Mary Martin)
YOU TELL ME YOUR DREAM (with Music Maids)
THE ANNIVERSARY WALTZ

26 March 1942 Guests: Robert Preston
Deems Reardon
Jack Mayhew

HOW ABOUT YOU?
BLUES IN THE NIGHT (with Music Maids)
I REMEMBER YOU
WE'RE THE COUPLE IN THE CASTLE (with Mary Martin)
K-K-K-Katy (with Music Maids)
MISS YOU.

2 April 1942 Guests: Walter Huston
Claude Thornhill
Kraft Choral Club

ARMY AIR CORPS SONG (with Music Maids)
SHE'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER
MOONLIGHT COCKTAIL
EASTER PARADE
SING ME A SONG OF THE ISLANDS (with Music Maids)

9 April 1942 Guests: Walter Pidgeon
June Havoc
Major John L. Dewitt, Jnr.

US FIELD ARTILLERY MARCH (The Caissons Go Rolling Along)
SKYLARK
I DON'T WANT TO WALK WITHOUT YOU
HONEY (with Quartet)
SWEETLY SHE SLEEPS, MY ALICE FAIR (with Walter Pidgeon)
I REMEMBER YOU

16 April 1942 Guests: Ronald Reagan
Spike Jones and his City Slickers
Sabu

K-K-K-Katy (with Music Maids)
MISS YOU "
I COME FROM TIMBUCK-THREE (With Mary Martin & Music Maids)
MAKE BELIEVE
APPLE BLOSSOM TIME (with Mary Martin)
MARY (with Music Maids)
SING ME A SONG OF THE ISLANDS (with Music Maids)

23 April 1942 Guests: Capt. Floyd J Sweet)

THE MARINES' HYMN (with chorus)
SKYLARK
SOMEBODY ELSE IS TAKING MY PLACE
PRETTY BABY
LILY OF LAGUNA (with Mary Martin)
JUST PLAIN LONESOME

30 April, 1942 Guests: Susan Hayward
Larry Adler
Cmdr. Gene Tunney USNR)

HEY MABEL (with Music Maids)
FRIENDSHIP (with Susan Hayward, Mary Martin)
MARY (with Music Maids)
NOT MINE
APPLE BLOSSOM TIME (with Mary Martin)
OH! HOW I MISS YOU TONIGHT
I REMEMBER YOU.

For reasons not recorded Bing was not on KMH on 7th and 14 May 1942

21 May 1942 Guests: Carole Landis
Virginia Weidler
Rear-Admiral I.C. Johnsun, USN.

DON'T SIT UNDER THE APPLE TREE (with Music Maids)
COUNT ME IN (with Virginia Weidler)
SKYLARK
THE LAMPLIGHTER'S SERENADE
LILY OF LAGUNA (with Mary Martin)
GREAT DAY (with Music Maids)
MISS YOU " " "

28 May, 1942 Guests: Ruth Hussey
Frank McHugh
David Freeman

THE BOMBARDIER SONG
MARY (both with Music Maids)
NOT MINE
JINGLE, JANGLE, JINGLE (with Mary Martin and Music Maids)
HEY! MABEL (with Frank McHugh)
YOU'RE A GRAND OLD FLAG (with Music Maids)
JOHNNY DOUGHBOY FOUND A ROSE IN IRELAND (with Music Maids)

4 June 1942 Guests: John Garfield
Rosemary Lane
Major Marion L. Dawson, USMC

DON'T SIT UNDER THE APPLE TREE (with Music Maids)
JUST PLAIN LONESOME
WAIT TIL THE SUN SHINES, NELLIE (with Mary Martin)
MARY'S A GRAND OLD NAME
SLEEPY LAGOON

11 June 1942

THE BOMBARDIER SONG (with Music Maids)
THE LAMPLIGHTER'S SERENADE
JINGLE, JANGLE, JINGLE (with Mary Martin and Music Maids)
TALKING TO THE MOON (with Music Maids)
NOT MINE.

18 June, 1942

HEY! MABEL (with Music Maids)
DADDY, DEAR OLD DADDY
NOT MINE

I'M SAVING A DIME (OUT OF EVERY DOLLAR)
LOVE IS A SONG
WHEN MY DREAMBOAT COMES HOME (With the Music Maids)
SLEEPY LAGOON.

(The above 4 titles should be added to the programme for June 18, 1942 if not already shewn - some copies only)

25 June 1942 Guest: Fred Astaire

SONG OF FREEDOM (with Music Maids)
I'LL CAPTURE YOUR HEART (with Fred
TALKING TO THE MOON (with (Astaire
Music Maids)
BE CAREFUL, ITS MY HEART
JINGLE, JANGLE, JINGLE (with Mary Martin & Music Maids)
DEAR LITTLE BOY OF MINE
A BOY IN KHAKI, A GIRL IN LACE

Bing then on holiday until:

1 October 1942 Guests: Cass Daley
Col. S.R.Harris.
I'VE GOT A GAL IN KALAMAZOO (with Music Maids)
CONCHITA, MARQUITA, LOLITA, PEPITA, ROSITA, JUANITA LOPEZ (with Music Maids)
BE CAREFUL, ITS MY HEART
WHEN YOU'RE A LONG, LONG, WAY FROM HOME
ONLY FOREVER (with Mary Martin)
A BOY IN KHAKI, A GIRL IN LACE.

8 October 1942 Guests: Milton Berle
Desi Arnaz
EVERYTHING I'VE GOT (with Music Maids)
LOVE IS A SONG
WAIT TILL THE SUN SHINES, NELLIE (with Mary Martin)
BY THE LIGHT OF THE SIL'VRY MOON
WHITE CHRISTMAS

15 October 1942 Guests: Charlie Ruggles
I'VE GOT A GIRL IN KALAMAZOO (with Music Maids) Cass Daley
Capt. E.J. Burns (Chaplain)
AT LAST
PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME (with Mary
MY BUDDY (Martin
MY DEVOTION.

23 October 1942 Guests: Judy Canova
Andrew Tombes
Master Sgt.Raymond
EVERYTHING I'VE GOT
S'POSIN'
MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU
A YANK IN A TANK
WHITE CHRISTMAS

29 October 1942 Guests: Bob Hope
Eve Arden
PRAISE THE LORD AND PASS THE AMMUNITION (with The Charioteers)
THE ROAD TO MOROCCO (with Bob Hope)
MY DEVOTION
DEAR OLD PAL OF MINE
MISTER FIVE BY FIVE (with Music Maids)
A BOY IN KHAKI, A GIRL IN LACE.

5 November 1942 Guests: Cass Daley
Richard Hadyn
THE MARINES'HYMN Mrs. Helen Fletcher
WHERE WERE YOU Col. Leroy P Hunt .USM
LAST NIGHT?(with Cass Daley)
BY THE LIGHT OF THE SIL'VRY MOON
ROLL-E-O-ROLLING ALONG (with Mary Martin &
SUNDAY (with Music Maids)Music Maids)
AT LAST
DAYBREAK.

12 November 1942 Guests: Ginny Sims
Edgar Buchanan, Edgar
PRAISE THE LORD Brophy, Mrs. Dolores
AND PASS THE AMMUNITION Garcia.
MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU
DEARLY BELOVED (with Ginny Sims)
AIN'T GOT A DIME TO MY NAME (with Music
JUNE IN JANUARY Maids)
DEAR OLD PAL OF MINE.

19 November 1942 Guests: Broderick Crawford, Ella Mae Morse,
Freddie Slack
A YANK IN A TANK
DOWN THE ROAD A PIECE (with Ella Mae Morse)
PLEASE THINK OF ME
OVER THE RAINBOW
DAYBREAK
WHEN YOU'RE A LONG,LONG,WAY FROM HOME (with Music Maids)

26 November 1942 Guests: Virginia Weidler
Geo. Tobias, Janet
PRAISE THE LORD AND PASS THE (Blair
AMMUNITION
YOU'D BE SO NICE TO COME HOME TO (with Janet Blair)
MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU
PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME (with Virginia Weidler)
SAN ANTONIO ROSE (with Music Maids)
MY BUDDY

3 December 1942 Guest: Dorothy Lamour

AIN'T GOT A DIME TO MY NAME (with Music
THE ROAD TO MOROCCO (with (Maids
Dorothy Lamour - parody)
DEARLY BELOVED
GOOD MORNING MR. ZIP-ZIP-ZIP (with Music
WHITE CHRISTMAS Maids)